



# THE PENNY WEDDING

By



CHARLES · H · ROSS ·

"JUDY" OFFICE, 73 FLEET ST., E.C.

**DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD DIE!**

*Fennings' Children's Powders Prevent Convulsions,*  
ARE COOLING AND SOOTHING

# FENNINGS' CHILDREN'S POWDERS

Do not contain Calomel, Opium, Morphia, nor anything  
injurious to a tender babe.

**For Children Cutting their Teeth, to prevent Convulsions, and quickly to cure Fevers, Fits, Sickesses, Windy Gripes, Thrush, and other Diseases of Childhood.**

These pleasant-tasting Powders, if occasionally given to an Infant or Child, will

**SAFE TEETHING.**

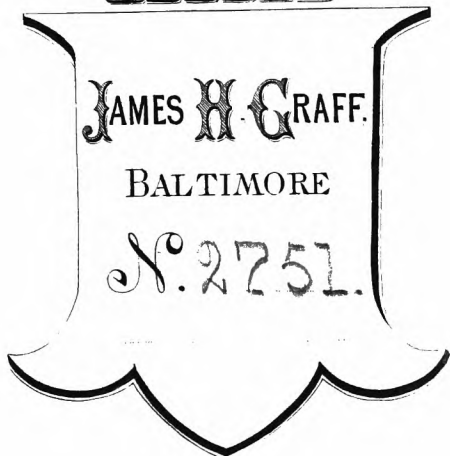
Read F

**BRONCHITIS CURED.**

an  
in  
fro  
Co  
Fe  
ful  
the  
S

**Sore Throats Cured with One Dose.**

F  
B  
E  
D  
O  
C  
F  
e



*Sold in bottles, for 25c. each, with full directions, by all Chemists.*

Observe the Proprietor's name—**ALFRED FENNINGS**—printed on the Government Stamp round each Bottle, without which none are genuine.  
Read FENNINGS' "EVERYBODY'S DOCTOR." Sent post-free for 13 stamps. Direct to **ALFRED FENNINGS, West Cowes, Isle of Wight.**  
A box of Fennings' Lung Healers or Fennings' Children's Powders will be sent post-free upon receipt of 15 stamps directed to

**ALFRED FENNINGS, West Cowes, Isle of Wight.**

**EASY TEETHING.**

...e frequently  
...eething, and  
...est and best  
...not contain  
...babe.  
...directions.  
...ints on *Feeding*,  
...copy.

**COUGHS CURED.**

**ERS,**  
Asthma,  
ption,  
ate Coughs,  
a slight cold  
ry affections  
es, Incipient  
urface. (See  
2s. 9d., with  
quantity of

**Sore Throats Cured with One Dose.**

**DOSE.**  
TED  
**ER,**  
**TURE.**  
Dose.  
Doses.  
s.  
or Typhus

# DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S **CHLORODYNE**

THE ORIGINAL AND ONLY GENUINE.

**A**DVICE TO INVALIDS.—If you wish to obtain quiet refreshing sleep, free from headache, relief from pain and anguish, to calm and assuage the weary aching of protracted disease, invigorate the nervous media, and regulate the circulating systems of the body, you will provide yourselves with that marvellous remedy discovered by Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE (late Medical Staff), to which he gave the name of

## **CHLORODYNE,**

And which is admitted by the profession to be the most wonderful and valuable remedy ever discovered.

**CHLORODYNE** is the best remedy known for COUGHS, CONSUMPTION, BRONCHITIS, ASTHMA.

**CHLORODYNE** effectually checks and arrests those too often fatal diseases known as DIPHTHERIA, FEVER, CROUP, AGUE.

**CHLORODYNE** acts like a charm in DIARRHŒA, and is the only specific in CHOLERA and DYSENTERY.

**CHLORODYNE** effectually cuts short all attacks of EPILEPSY, HYSTERIA, PALPITATION, and SPASMS.

**CHLORODYNE** is the only palliative in NEURALGIA, RHEUMATISM, GOUT, CANCER, TOOTHACHE, MENINGITIS, &c.

The Right Hon. EARL RUSSELL has graciously favoured J. T. DAVENPORT with the following—

“Earl Russell communicated to the College of Physicians that he received a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Manilla, to the effect that Cholera has been raging fearfully, and that the ONLY remedy of any service was CHLORODYNE.”—See *Lancet*, December 1st, 1864.

From W. VESALIUS PETTIGREW, M.D.

“I have no hesitation in stating that I have never met with any medicine so efficacious as an Anti-spasmodic and Sedative. I have used it in Consumption, Asthma, Diarrhœa, and other diseases, and am perfectly satisfied with the results.”

From Drs. B. J. BOULTON & Co., Horncastle.

“We have made pretty extensive use of Chlorodyne in our practice lately, and look upon it as an excellent direct Sedative and Anti-spasmodic. It seems to allay pain and irritation in whatever organ, and of whatever cause. It induces a feeling of comfort and quietude not obtainable by any other remedy, and it seems to possess this great advantage over all other Sedatives, that it leaves no unpleasant after-effects.”

**CAUTION.**—The extraordinary medical reports of the efficacy of Chlorodyne render it of vital importance that the Public should obtain the genuine, which bears the words,

**“DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE.”**

Vice-Chancellor WOOD stated that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was undoubtedly the Inventor of CHLORODYNE; that the whole story of the defendant, FREEMAN, was deliberately untrue.

Lord Chancellor SELBORNE and Lord Justice JAMES stated that the defendant had made a deliberate misrepresentation of the decision of Vice-Chancellor WOOD.

Chemists throughout the land confirm this decision that Dr. J. C. BROWNE was the Inventor of CHLORODYNE.

Sold in Bottles at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 6d. by all Chemists.

Sole Manufacturer: J. T. DAVENPORT, Gt. Russell St., London. W.C.

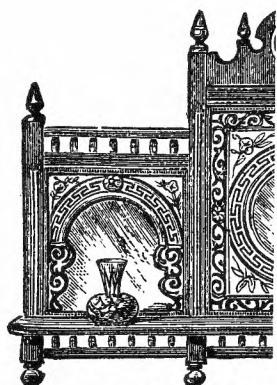


# FURNISH THROUGHOUT. OETZMANN & CO.

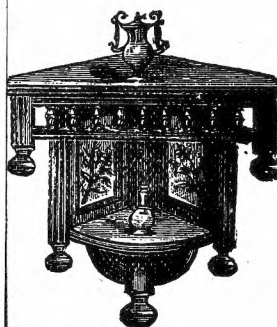
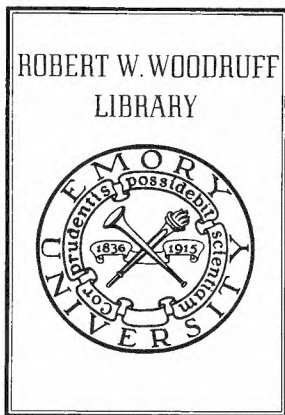
67, 69, 71, 73, 77 & 79,  
**HAMPSTEAD ROAD,**

NEAR TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON.

**CARPETS, FURNITURE, BEDDING, DRAPERY,  
FURNISHING IRONMONGERY. CHINA, GLASS, etc.**

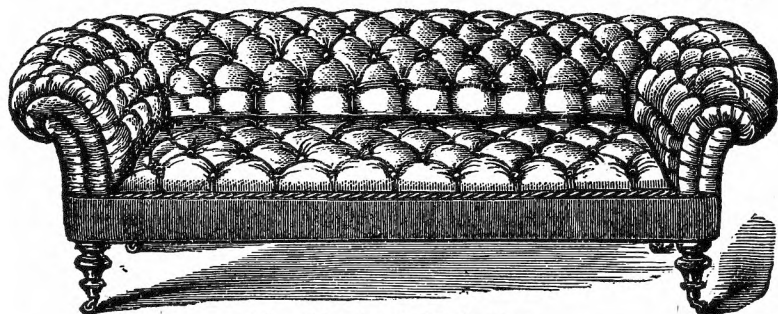


**Handsome Black and Gold Glass.**  
With Shelf, and richly decorated Panels, 4 ft long by  
2 ft. 6 in. high, £5 os. od.



**Decorated Corner  
Bracket, 12/-**

A variety of Early English  
Cabinets, Glasses, Brackets,  
&c., in stock.



**The Chesterfield Settee.**

5 ft. 6 in. long, sueded hair, finished very soft ... .. £7 7 0  
Ditto, ditto, with spring edge, upholstered in best manner 8 8 0

*EVERY WEDNESDAY. PRICE TWOPENCE.*

# J U D Y.



Forwarded to any part of the United Kingdom Post Free.

Twelve Months, 10s. 10d.; Six Months, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 9d.  
Payable in Advance.



CHASEMIRE

# THE PENNY WEDDING.

A ROMANCE OF

LOVE AND WAR, WASTED AFFECTIONS, EMPTY PHYSIC  
BOTTLES, AND UNPAID SCHOOL BILLS.

RELATED BY

THE MAJOR.

AND PASSED FOR PRESS BY

CHARLES H. ROSS.



WITH PORTRAITS OF THE PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS, AND  
PICTURES OF THE MANY THRILLING INCIDENTS, BY

ARCHIBALD CHASEMORE.

“Haste to the wedding.”—*Song.*

“A PENNY saved is a PENNY gained.”—*Proverb.*

LONDON:

“JUDY” OFFICE, 73 FLEET STREET, E.C.





## F A C T S.

---

“THE wedding ring of Queen Victoria was quite plain. When the Prince put it on her finger, a signal was given by Lord Uxbridge for the cannon to fire a royal salute, and the bells of London and Westminster rang a peal.”—*Lady's News*, 1853.

“IN Holland, after a man and his wife have been married twenty-five years, there is a solemnity which is called a ‘silver marriage ;’ after fifty, it is dignified with the name of a ‘golden marriage.’”—*Things Not Generally Known*.

“ADVERTISING a wife, as it is called, by a husband, is of no effect unless he can prove that the advertisement was brought to the notice of the person giving her credit previously to his having done so.”—*Weekly Times*, 1856.

“THE first year of a woman's married life is not always most free from vexations and troubles.”—*Mrs. Parkes*.

“THE new Divorce Court was established by an Act passed in August, 1857.”—*English History*.

By Her Majesty's Royal Warrant Patent.



**SWINBORNE'S  
PATENT REFINED  
ISINGLASS.**

FOR INVALIDS AND CONFECTIONARY  
PURPOSES.

*See Report of W. T. Brande, Esq., F.R.S.  
& J. T. Cooper, Esq., Analytical Chemists.*

DIRECTIONS FOR USE AND RECIPES ENCLOSED.

**1 oz. Packet, 1s.**

Each Genuine Packet bears the  
Signature of the Patentee.

*J. A. Swinborne*

WAREHOUSE,

ST. ANDREW'S HILL, QUEEN VICTORIA ST. LONDON.

## UPON THE PLATFORM.

---

THE very cordial reception awarded to my friend Major Penny upon the occasion of his presenting the Public with his "Twopenny Twins," has probably induced him more readily than might otherwise have been the case, to allow himself to be persuaded to make a second appearance.

Although it is proverbial that second thoughts are always best, and that sequels are invariably inferior to first thoughts, I venture to hope that the "Penny Wedding" may prove an exception to the latter rule.

That, however, the Major himself had some doubts upon this or some other point, cannot be denied. I was seeing him off the other evening at the Victoria Station, from whence he was going *alone* to the Paris Exhibition, and as the bell rang he caught me by the hand: "Great Editor," he cried, "it is strange that I, who upon the Ensanguined Field——"

Just then, unhappily, the train began to move, and a moment afterwards bore him and the rest of the sentence far away; but there was an anxious, appealing, half-tearful look in his eyes that I shall never forget.

Since then I have wondered whether he was meditating what Mrs. Penny would say should this book ever fall into her hands.

C. H. R.

*February, 1879.*



**FAMILY MEDICINE.**—The most healthy families are visited, at times, with some ailments, and at such times no medicine can be resorted to with more perfect confidence than

**PARR'S LIFE PILLS**

This esteemed Medicine produces immediate relief, without the slightest pain or inconvenience.—May be had of any Chemist.

## DETAILS.

---

	PAGE
<i>THEY MEET</i> . . . . .	15
<i>HE GETS INTO TROUBLE</i> . . . . .	22
<i>SHE SAVES HIM</i> . . . . .	28
<i>SHE SEES AFTER HIM</i> . . . . .	34
<i>HE DOES DESPERATE DEEDS</i> . . . . .	42
<i>THEY ARE BETROTHED</i> . . . . .	49
<i>HE NAMES THE DAY</i> . . . . .	55
<i>THEY MARRY HIM</i> . . . . .	61
<i>HE HONEYMOONS</i> . . . . .	66
<i>SHE IS PRACTICAL</i> . . . . .	73
<i>THEY RETURN</i> . . . . .	81
<i>HE HAS A TIME OF IT</i> . . . . .	85
<i>HE SHOWS THE WAY</i> . . . . .	90
<i>HE PLOTS AND PLANS</i> . . . . .	96
<i>SHE ASKS QUESTIONS</i> . . . . .	103
<i>HE IS VIOLENT</i> . . . . .	108
<i>THEY WANT HIM</i> . . . . .	113
<i>HE GOES FORTH</i> . . . . .	118
<i>HE COMES BACK</i> . . . . .	124
<i>SHE HOUNDS HIM DOWN</i> . . . . .	129
<i>THEY RATTLE HIM UP</i> . . . . .	134
<i>SHE REFLECTS</i> . . . . .	139
<i>HE IS NOT HAPPY</i> . . . . .	144
<i>SHE IS OUT</i> . . . . .	149
<i>HE IS NOWHERE</i> . . . . .	153

# KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES.

---

KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES contain no Opium, Morphia, nor any violent drug. It is the most effective remedy known to the Medical Profession in the Cure of Coughs, Asthma, Bronchitis. One Lozenge alone relieves ; one or two at bed time ensures rest when troubled by the throat. They are invaluable to take to Church or Public Meetings, being so handy in the pocket.

---

## TESTIMONIAL. (*Original may be seen.*)

DEAR SIR,—Having tried your Cough Lozenges in India, I have much pleasure in testifying to their beneficial effects in cases of Incipient Consumption, Asthma, and Bronchial affections ; so good a medicine ought to be known to be appreciated. I have prescribed it largely with the best results.

W. B. G.

---

*Prepared and sold in Boxes and Tins, 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d.,  
4s. 6d., and 11s. each, by*

**THOMAS KEATING, Chemist, &c.,**  
St. Paul's Churchyard, London.

---

Sold Retail by all Druggists and Medicine Vendors in the World.



## CHAPTER I.

### THEY MEET.

AM Major Penny, the head of our family. It is possible that my name may not be unknown in connection with Deeds of Daring on the Ensanguined Field, and I may also have been heard of as the uncle of the Twopenny Twins.

I am not prepared to describe myself as absolutely in the spring flowery period of my youth. Rather do I content myself by alluding to my time of life as the PRIME, and I refer to the accompanying illustrations, by Mr. Archibald Chasemore, those desirous of further particulars. I may, however, incidentally mention that I have a contempt for the youth of the present generation of the male sex, and, as an uncle of twins, experience has caused me to rather loathe boys than otherwise.

I do not deem it necessary for the purposes of this



narrative that I should just now enter into a lengthened account of my family, which consists, as upon previous occasions, of The Girls, my maiden sisters, who still remain of mature age, with a growing tendency towards increased maturity. They are named as heretofore, Bathsheba, Cassandra, and Ursula Penny. It may also be added (with the kind permission of Mr. Longfellow) that rising young curates may come, and rising young curates may go, but that the Girls go off never.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the whole management of our household is yet dependent upon my exertions, and that, as of old, I check the groceries, audit the washing-book, and regulate things generally, and that I am now upon my way to town upon business of importance with our family solicitor.

As a journey to London is not an every-day occurrence, I have decided to take a bed at Dozer's private hotel for a couple of nights, and to seize this opportunity for doing a little shopping that I have had in contemplation for some time back. To carry out this project I find it necessary that I should take luggage with me, and, going into the matter, discover that the likeliest things in that way, at the moment upon the establishment, are a venerable hair-covered trunk with bald patches, and a carpet bag of weird floral design, which I pack tightly, and put what is left over into a bandbox, originally the property of Bathsheba.

Incidentally it may be mentioned, at this juncture, that the station nearest to my place of residence, which is in a rather out-of-the-way spot, is one from which, under existing regulations, you cannot book through



All there.

to London. It is necessary to take another ticket at Haggelbury Junction, where you also change carriages, cross a bridge, pass through a tunnel, and go up and down many steps, whilst your luggage crosses the line in a fitful fashion an article at a time, and is carefully flung down, the wrong side up, at the wrong end of the platform.

But here's the train. I am seated in it, and my luggage is stowed away in the van. Here, too (in due course), is Haggelbury Junction. Here (after some searching for him) is a porter to see to the things. Here are the steps, and here we go up, up, up, with some one pushing behind. Here are the bridge and more steps, and here we go down, down, down O, with somebody else pushing behind.

Here is the ticket office. "The other window round the corner." Which corner, I wonder? They seem to

be always changing the pay-places at this confounded station ; and there's the bell ringing for my train !

It was I who was wrong, it would appear, though the ticket clerk need not have been so grossly impertinent ; and I don't believe, even now, he has given me the right change. However, I had better reckon it over again in the train, and——

“Any more going on ?”

“Certainly ; I am ! Bless me ! I nearly forgot the bonnet-box, and——”



A little Mistake.

Some one calling after me ; some one young and engaging, in an extremely tight-fitting black dress.

“You left this behind you, in the pay-place. Your ticket.”

“A thousand thanks, my dear young lady. Permit me to assure you that I shall never——”

“Now then, sir ; now then, miss ! you'd better look sharp if you want to catch it.”

We have looked sharp. We have rushed madly

down a passage, and up more steps. We have been tossed and tumbled into a first-class carriage. I am panting, and she, seemingly quite cool and collected, is smiling. When I have got a little of my breath back again I'll conclude the sentence the vulgar porter fellow cut short.



Another

Before I have got my breath back, however, she says, "Are not you afraid you will catch cold, with your face to the wind?"

It is considerate on her part, of course; and yet I somehow don't quite like the idea of her asking the question, and reply hastily, "Oh, no, thank you; I like plenty of air."

By the way, though—(I make this reflection two or three minutes later)—there is a frightful draught here, and already I have got one cinder in one eye. She says, "I fear you will catch cold."

I say, "I beg pardon. You yourself would probably prefer it closed?"



"Oh, no," she says, "I am sitting with my back to the engine; I always do. Pray allow me."

Before I can interfere she has risen swiftly, and closed the window. At the moment I am so surprised I can't think of anything to say upon the subject. Then I venture to observe, "According to my experience, ladies, as a rule, prefer to ride the other way, facing the engine. Is it not so?"

She says, "Women, as a rule, are stupid. They don't generally know which way a train is going, and sit down on the wrong side. Then they want the window up, and annoy other people."

I say, "Madam, I am really much indebted to your care. Without you I should certainly have lost my ticket, and gained a sore throat."

She says, "Yes?" and opens a newspaper.

Meanwhile I contemplate her respectfully, and reflect. She is very young—seventeen, I should think—and very pretty, and perfectly at her ease. She is, possible, a great traveller. She seems quite used to travelling alone. She is evidently a remarkable young lady. I wonder who the deuce she is? I wonder also whether she knows that I am wondering. Probably she knows I am looking at her, although nothing could be more tranquil and seemingly unconscious than her face.

"You have no paper," she says, suddenly. "Would you like half this? Here is the war news: nothing fresh."

I thank her courteously, and accept the proffered sheet, observing, as I do so, that the Eastern Difficulty appears to be as far from solution now as ever. She

says, "As an army man, you are, of course, able to study its military aspect. From that point of view it must be deeply interesting."

\* \* \* \* \*

Upon my word of honour, I doubt whether I have ever had the good fortune to meet with so well-informed a young lady. I have given her my views of the whole business, and she agrees with me perfectly. I have also related the principal incidents connected with the Indian Mutiny, which I was in part instrumental in quelling, and mention the number of black fellows I myself gave orders to be blown from guns. I really had no idea the time had passed so quickly. Here we are, actually at our journey's end!

"Hallo, guard! Open this window! Let us out!"



*The Last (for the present).*

There is no one to attend to one, of course; and,

after frantic struggles I manage to get down the glass, and am now straining every nerve to get hold of the handle outside.

"There is a handle inside," she says; "allow me." And turning it as she speaks, the difficulty is at an end.

She is really a most remarkable young lady! Who and what is she? Where does she live?

"Is not that your bandbox?" she inquires. I was leaving it behind me again in the confusion. "I noticed it in your hand," she adds, smiling slightly: "it struck me as rather a strange kind of thing for you to carry—Major."

---

## CHAPTER II.

### HE GETS INTO TROUBLE.

It has frequently been remarked upon the Enslanguined Field (and elsewhere) that I, Major Penny, never lose my presence of mind. A Distinguished Commanding Officer (now, alas! no more) once observed during a review of cavalry (auxiliary), when our corps had been charged by a runaway animal attached to a conveyance belonging to an itinerant greengrocer, and our line broken in several places: "Major," he said, as I was in the act of picking myself up and recovering my hat and sword, whilst giving the word

of command to my men to form a square—"Major Penny, you're equal to the occasion."

Under these circumstances I simply ask, and naturally pause for a reply after asking, "How is it that I should now be nowhere?" Briefly summarized, the facts are these: A young and lovely lady, hitherto a perfect stranger, has shared a first-class carriage with me during a journey of an hour and fifteen minutes, during which we have discussed the Eastern Question and other novel topics of absorbing interest, and at parting at the terminus in London I am on the point of delicately expressing a hope that this meeting shall not be our last, when all at once a series of untoward circumstances occur, and she goes one way in a cab, and my luggage goes another, and I go a third, crying aloud for a hair trunk, a carpet bag of weird floral design, and a bandbox containing a hat.

At the very instant that I am gently pressing a tiny gloved hand, and am just beginning to make an observation, my eye falls upon my hair trunk being



*Energy of the Major.*

pounced upon and borne away by a reckless porter, and, hastily excusing myself, I dash after him.

The porter repudiates my ownership of the hair trunk, but I grapple with him, and after a desperate encounter recover my property. Whilst doing so, however, my eye falls upon the carpet bag of weird floral design departing in an opposite direction, and recovering that also by resorting to similar violence, I seize both triumphantly, whilst in my excitement I trample on the handbox, and gaze around for the cab with the young lady in it.

She is gone. I search wildly, but in vain, dragging my property about with me; and at length, bitterly disappointed and prostrate with fatigue, call a cab myself, and bid the driver take me to Dozer's Hotel.

It is possible, should you be a Londoner, you may never even have heard of Dozer's, as I have reason to believe that the hotels of London are known only to visitors from the country, who hunt them up in Bradshaw, and drive to them in a desperate kind of way, because they know no better. In like fashion I hunted up Dozer, and put myself into the hands of Providence.

The cabman himself does not know Dozer, but he knows the name of the street where Dozer dozes, which is Middlesex Street, Strand.

I find that Dozer's is a private house of a remarkably genteel and quiet exterior, with a white doorstep, and the name of Dozer on a bright brass plate.

I see nothing of Dozer himself, but I take a wiry little lady, with tight corkscrew curls on either side of her temples, to be Mrs. Dozer, and am confirmed in

that opinion by her popping out from a kind of cupboard as I cross the mat, and popping down upon me and bustling me and my luggage upstairs to a spare bed-room.

Whilst, as a general rule, objecting to be popped upon and hustled (a thing I never permitted, in my own house, from the Girls), I see no particular reason to object to the apartment provided for me, or the tin can of hot water.

It is not my intention, this evening, to commence upon the business that has brought me to town, but I shall get at it the very first thing in the morning. In the meanwhile I see no particular reason why I should not have a nice little bit of dinner, and go afterwards to the play. Upon inquiry I find that I can have a very nice dinner indeed at Dozer's *table d'hôte*, which takes place in half an hour, and I have just time to dress.

My dress clothes were packed, according to my directions, in the hair trunk, and laid out flat. I'll unpack them,—Hullo!



Astonishment of the Major.

It is extraordinary that when you leave a thing—the simplest thing, indeed—for another person to do, it is invariably done wrong. Bathsheba has done something to the lock of the hair trunk, and I can't get the key to turn.—Ah!

At last I have done it. I can't get the key out again, though; but the trunk is open. Good gracious!

What on earth did Bathsheba mean by cramming an antiquated crinoline arrangement in here, on the top of—a flannel petticoat! This is awful! this is terrible! This is positively appalling! After all it would appear that the hair trunk, for the possession of which I struggled with that porter, was *not* mine. On referring to the outside of the lid, I see now, only too plainly, I was mistaken. My hair trunk had many more bald places. There must have been two hair trunks, then.

"Who's there?"

The Boots who brought my things upstairs says a policeman and a person from the railway are below, and want to speak to me.



Dismay of the Major.

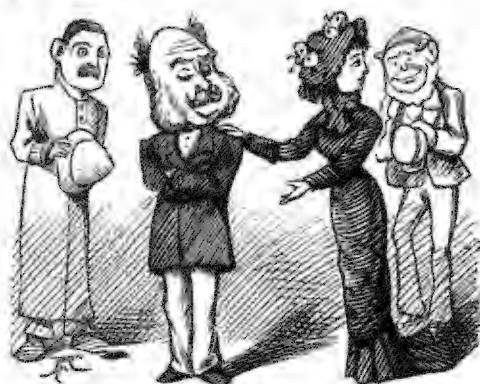


On reaching the passage the very porter meets my view, and instantly seizes me. He is out of breath.

It subsequently transpires he has run all the way after the cab; but he manages to gasp out, "That is the man who stole the trunk."

This is confoundedly ridiculous, and confoundedly awkward and unpleasant. The Boots looks very serious, so does Mrs. Dozer. I'll be hanged but I hardly know what to say. If I only had a friend who could speak to my respectability, and——

In the name of all that is astonishing, here is one. Here is, in point of fact, the very identical long-lost young lady,



Rescue of the Major.

"This is Major Penny," she says.

"Bless me! you don't say so?" cries Mrs. Dozer. "The Major Penny you were just speaking of? Policeman, my niece knows Major Penny. He is an officer in the Army, and highly connected."

\* \* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER III.

## SHE SAVES HIM.

MY stay in town has been rather longer than I had at first intended it should be. The Girls have written to ask how the legal business that brought me up to town is progressing, and whether I am comfortable at Dozer's.

Dozer's is quite a little world of its own, and has little in common with the noisy thoroughfare north of it. Its members have, in a general way, a scared, rabbit-like look on them, and connive in shady places on landings.

There is a good deal of whispering going on at Dozer's, which is partly owing to the dense population of the place, for at night, to judge by the snoring, there can scarcely be a cupboard unoccupied, and whatever out-of-the-way nook you creep into, there is at least one eavesdropper peeping over your shoulder or breathing in the nape of your neck.

The society being equally divided, as well as I can make out, between very newly-married couples and spinster ladies of mature age, the whispering and listening may, to a certain extent, be satisfactorily accounted for.

Before I have been many hours an inmate of Dozer's hotel, Mrs. Dozer has informed me, confidentially, that the company she entertains is, without exception, most

select, and that everybody is closely connected with the very highest county families. Possibly their furtive look, as though they were travelling *incognito* and were in momentary expectation of discovery, may be owing to their having put up at Dozer's, whose advertisements are seemingly framed for the purpose of attracting the economically disposed.

During the periods between meals the rabbits are scattered about; visiting, as well as I can understand, the most harmless and inexpensive of London sights, of which, in a shamefaced way, they impart the details to one another at meal-times, blushing much.

I observe that I am treated with great deference by the little company, which I confess is gratifying, it being, indeed, what I have been accustomed to; and when I make an observation at the dinner-table, there is a courteous silence.

As, as a rule, nobody else makes observations of an audible character except myself or Mrs. Dozer, or her niece (Miss Pinner) when asking my opinion upon a subject; the silence, when not as above described as courteous, is usually profound.

Indeed, after three days' experience of Dozer's, I find that what I may call the extraneous observations (those, I mean, not emanating from me) refer to requests for small pieces more, and regrets that there is a necessity to trouble the person nearest the potatoes to pass one.

On the arrival of any fresh rabbit (they come and go from time to time), I overhear Mrs. Dozer pointing me out to the new-comer as one of her most valued acquisitions, a gentleman of the highest connexions,

and an officer of the highest rank, who has been through all "the wars," a statement which certainly is rather too sweeping, but being in the form of a private communication to another person, I hardly see how I can interfere with it.

Only presently, when Mrs. Dozer takes me on one side to whisper that the newest comer is Mr. Tomkins, of the Midland Counties, whose family I must have heard of as one of the oldest and most highly esteemed, I half feel inclined to say, "They're a rum-looking lot, if they're all that pattern."

Away from the Dozers', I have been progressing, I cannot deny, somewhat slowly with the business that brought me to town. The fact is, that from a combination of circumstances, Mrs. Dozer, Miss Pinner, and I have been twice to the play, and taken an oyster or two, on one occasion, afterwards, and a lobster on the other; and next day I hardly got into the City in time to catch my man. Again, Miss Pinner and I have visited a picture gallery or two, and that occupied the greater portion of two days. The fact of Miss Pinner being an orphan, with nobody in London but her aunt, who is necessarily confined to the house a good deal, to go out with, has really necessitated certain sacrifices on my part on the score of gallantry.

In short, I am suddenly startled on the morning of the fifth day by discovering that I have been so long in town, and, as yet, done nothing. I therefore take my bath with determination, resolutely thrust on my habiliments, breakfast lightly, ignore the newspaper, and take a 'bus to the Bank.

I may here mention that my chief object in coming

to town is to transfer a portion of my money from the quarter in which I have invested it to other quarters where I can get much more for it, and that in so doing I act in accordance with a determination I have arrived at some considerable time, though I have not thought fit to mention the circumstance to the Girls.

The necessary process of transfer is a somewhat tedious one, and is moreover fraught with a certain amount of unpleasantness, owing to my having to break it to one man of business that it is my intention to place my affairs in the hands of another. I am not personally acquainted with the other, but I shall of course make the strictest inquiries before doing anything definite. The first part of the process takes such a long while, and the amount of pedestrianism necessary before getting at the people I am to make strict inquiry of, results in my eventually deciding on taking a certain amount of risk in the matter, leaving the business in No. 2's hands, and taking a cab back to Dozer's, thoroughly dead-beat.



Five-o'clock Tea.

I find Mrs. Dozer and Miss Pinner at their five-o'clock tea, and join them, at their request.

Mrs. Dozer remarks that I look knocked up, and suggests a teaspoonful of brandy. I allow that I am tired, take the brandy, and, feeling better, briefly describe the business I have been on.

"Did you say the name of your new man of business was Fogson?" asks Miss Pinner, excitedly. "Good heavens, aunt! do you think it's the same person who robbed and ruined poor papa?"

\* \* \* \* \*



Deeds of Violence.

I am in a hansom flying along the Embankment. We are blocked up on Ludgate Hill. I am out of the hansom, flying along on foot. I am in another hansom. I am at Fogson's office. Fogson is not in. The clerk does not know whether or not he will return that evening. I have got hold of that clerk, and am shaking him.



Saved! Saved!!

I see my precious documents on Fogson's table yet untouched. I bound towards them, seize them with a yell of triumph, and fly to the door. I have escaped. I am saved; but I have scarcely a gasp of breath left in me, and I reach Dozer's again more dead than alive.



The Major's Preserver.

The ladies are in a state of the greatest anxiety, and they are powerfully moved by the news of my success. Mrs. Dozer laughs, Miss Pinner's eyes fill with tears, and next moment I am on my knees blessing her as my Preserver to whom I shall ever owe a deep debt of gratitude. At a moment of this kind one is not always so careful as one might be in one's choice of language.

---

## CHAPTER IV

### SHE SEES AFTER HIM.

It has been remarked, upon the Ensanguined Field, and subsequently, whilst retreating under heavy fire, by a Distinguished Officer (alas ! now no more—not the same one, however, referred to in a previous chapter), that I, Major Penny, am seemingly impervious to fatigue when called upon for the display of sustained action.

"Major," said the Distinguished Officer above alluded to (I have told the story upon many occasions at mess dinners and public banquets, and incorporated it into a letter to the Editor of the *Times*, which, however, was not printed), "Major, there is nothing left for us but to run for it, so let us put our best legs forward." And we did, too.



"Major," said the same Distinguished Officer, speaking of the circumstance some time afterwards, "I shall never forget you. You led us, Major."

It was the case; and upon subsequent occasions when it became necessary to employ similar tactics, it was the case again.

"Major," said the same officer, after one of these, "at heading a retreat you have no equal."

How is it, then, that I, who have thus braved fatigue, and kept up a two-mile run without turning a hair, whilst the cannons have thundered and the deadly missiles rent the air in the rear, should now be utterly prostrate after the excitement of that rush to the fraudulent person's office in the City, for the purpose of recovering my precious documents?

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to spend any further time in conjecture. The fact remains: I am quite knocked up. Mrs. Dozer says I have taken a chill, and recommends me to put my feet in hot water with a spoonful of mustard in it.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have done so. I have also had something warm, and have gone to bed early.

But next morning I don't yet feel quite well, and Mrs. Dozer advises me to keep my room for a day or two, and take care of myself. Mrs. Dozer promises that she also will take care of me, and Miss Pinner says she will too.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am at present occupied as above, and Mrs. Dozer

fetches and carries things at regular intervals; and I have had a little physic, and a good deal of broth, and some jelly, and a chop or two, and, for an invalid, don't feel altogether uncomfortable.

I am at this moment reaching a stage of convalescence wherein the pains have passed away, leaving only lassitude, best relieved by tonics, with intervals when I am desperately peckish, and call aloud for more chops.



The Ministering Angel.

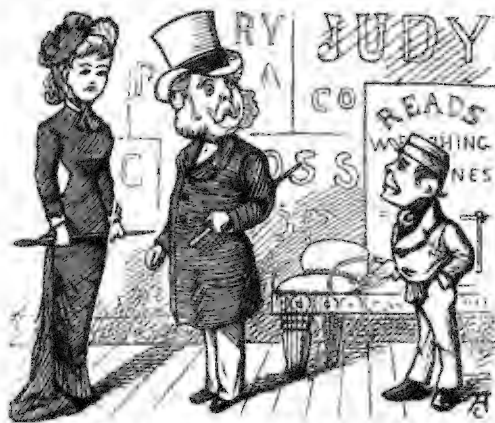
Through this stage, however, as during the Crisis before the Turn, Miss Pinner ministers to my wants with sweet solicitude, gliding gently to and fro, giving obdurate pillows delicate little digs with a nonsensically small fist, and adjusting and readjusting screens and curtains with scrupulous nicety. Mrs. Dozer is also assiduous, but flouncy; and brings with her sudden draughts, and goes away again leaving doors

open, which I get up and close, using language as I do so.

But then comes Miss Pinner again, and all once more is gentleness and peace, and a soft, soothing influence lulls the nerves of the excited Invalid, and it is time for a little more broth or jelly, or another chop!

Succeeding this period of convalescence is another period of greater convalescence still, when the Invalid, acting on advice, takes little strolls—Miss Pinner at his side in case of need, for he is as yet far from strong—as far as Adelphi Terrace or the garden on the Embankment, between Waterloo Bridge and Charing Cross Railway.

A day or two more, and the Invalid's strength is so far recovered that more lengthened journeys are projected and undertaken, including one by the Underground Railway, from the Temple to the Mansion



"Weigh both the two on yer for three 'a pence."

House Station, for the purpose of ascending the Monument—a feat which Miss Pinner asserts she has, all her life, been longing to accomplish.

At the Temple Station a boy in charge of the weighing machine urges us to try our "c'reck weight." "On'y a penny, sir," he says; and then in desperation, as the proposal is scornfully rejected, "Weigh both the two on yer for three 'a'pence."

The boy is rebuked for this unseemly levity. The train comes up and bears the couple away. Presently, arrived at Cannon Street, a short walk brings us to our journey's end, and we pay threepence each and begin going up the steps.

What makes the Invalid lag behind? Because he is an invalid, perhaps? No, there is another reason. Throughout the day he has been intending to ask a certain question, on which much depends.



"These steps are too much for you, I'm afraid, Major."

It occurred to him early this morning that man was not born to live alone, and that, in an invalided state, it was soothing to be waited on by a sympathetic soul. The question which arose out of these reflections, and bore direct reference to them, was upon the very point of being asked at the Temple Station when the confounded boy there began bothering. The presence of an unsympathizing crowd in the railway-carriage prevented the question being asked then. Now, surely, time and place were fitting, and the only difficulty was how to begin.

"These steps are too much for you, I am afraid, Major," Miss Pinner says. "It was inconsiderate of me to ask you to come. Do take my hand, and I will help you."

I have no doubt that nothing could be kinder than Miss Pinner's motive; but it cannot be denied that the situation, were the Major to allow himself to be pully-hoyed up as suggested, would be wanting in dignity.

However, he has not breath enough to climb stairs and ask questions at the same time.

As a natural sequence to the Monument is Birch's, in Cornhill. Miss Pinner has never yet eaten real turtle-soup, and has all her life been longing to do so.

On this occasion she tastes some of the best, and takes a sip or two of punch afterwards.

She said sherry, but I said punch; and now it is time for us to go back again to Dozer's.

There was quite a crowd at Birch's, and we could not get a table to ourselves, so there was no opportunity of asking the question there.



"Oh, Major, did you ever see such a lot of wedding-rings?"

Will there be any on the way back by the Underground? Very likely not. In that case, when and how——

"Oh, Major, do look here! did you ever see such a lot of wedding-rings together in one window? Who on earth can buy them?"

\* \* \* \* \*

The question *has* been asked. It has been pronounced sudden—and *so* unexpected—but it is under consideration.

Mrs. Dozer has to be consulted, and Dozer—(I believe I have hitherto omitted to mention that there is also a Dozer of the male sex; but he is of no consequence whatever).

\* \* \* \* \*

The Dozers have been consulted now, and everybody has given their consent.

I cannot say upon whose authority the Rabbits have been consulted, but I believe that such has been the case, and that the whole warren are consenting parties to the proposed matrimonial arrangement. Indeed, I do not think I exaggerate the state of things when I say that general joy prevails, and the dinner-bell is ringing.

Here, too, is the post. And here is a letter from my maiden sisters.

What's this? Confound it! The Girls, my maiden sisters, have heard from some one I met accidentally in town that I have been very ill.

Why ever did I come to town alone?

And without my flannels!

How inconsiderate!

How unkind, how thoughtless of me not to write! And when would I have finished that dreadful legal business? It was the anxiety and worry about that which had made me ill.

But I must worry myself no more. The Girls themselves have determined to come up and see to it and see to me.

Bathsheba, Cassandra, and Ursula will start by the first train to-morrow morning.

Here's a go!

## CHAPTER V

## HE DOES DESPERATE DEEDS.



I would appear the Girls are bent upon taking decisive steps. It would seem that the Girls have made their minds up, and if I may be permitted a colloquial expression, mean to be "down on" me.

This is really very funny of the Girls! I have before now (see "Twopenny Twins" for particulars) observed that upon occasion the Girls rise equal to it, and form a square, as it were, with bayonets fixed.

This behaviour on the part of the Girls makes me smile—not unkindly, I trust; but still I cannot resist smiling. It is really too preposterous that I, who on the Ensanguined Field—that I, in point of fact—I, Major Penny, should be taken to task for what I do, and called to order by elder sisters, like a refractory small boy. Not, by the way, that I have exactly been called to order, but it might as well be clearly understood that I don't mean to be,

Where are the pen and ink? I'll just dash off a line or two to the Girls (there's just time to catch the post). I'll just dash off a line or two that I rather fancy the Girls will find a Settler.





The Major dashing off a few lines.

I have been dashing off a lot of lines, and have dashed off the points of a pen or two, and upset some ink ; but as yet I am not satisfied.

Ah, to be sure ! Why did I not think of that before ? I'll send a telegram.

The telegram is a noble institution, and saves a lot of awkwardness. You sometimes do not know how the deuce to begin a letter, and whether you ought to say the person you are writing to is your "dear sir," or only "dear sir," or simply "sir," or whether he ought not to be "dear Mr." whatever his name is. But in a telegram, or, indeed, on the humble post-card, no beginning is necessary ; and, again, there is no hesitation needed at the end relative to your being his "sincerely," "truly," "faithfully," or "obediently."

Then again—and this is the grand point—you can be abrupt, and need not go into any confounded troublesome explanations.

In the present instance a telegram is just exactly what I want. Here's a form, and here goes.

Let's see, now. You can get twenty words for your shilling, I shan't want as much.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is a confounded difficult thing to allay anxiety and express oneself intelligibly in twenty words, but I flatter myself I have done so; and now for a messenger to run with this to the telegraph-office — and now for dinner.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I come to think of it, now the telegram is gone, and there is no hope of recalling it, was it altogether politic on my part to say I was just upon the point of starting for Liverpool on business of importance, and that I would write full particulars in a day or two? Does not this almost seem like procrastinating the evil day? and won't the real explanation get awkwarder and awkwarder to make, the longer it is put off?

Possibly—only dinner is served just now, and it is all right for the present.

The dinner-hour at Dozer's has, gradually, become quite a pleasurable event to be looked forward to. As the oldest, and I may add the most honoured, of Mrs. Dozer's guests, I take the head of the table, whilst Mrs. Dozer faces me. The male Dozer does not dine with us. Not being able to get home from the City in time, he has some lukewarm bits and bats by himself, out in the passage or somewhere.

From the head of the table I lead the conversation to topics of general interest, such as the Eastern Diffi-

culties, and casually refer to past experience in time of war. This evening in particular I fight several battles o'er again, and charge the enemy with much slaughter, whilst, by the aid of the remains of the roast sirloin before me, I vividly conjure up the aspect of the Ensanguined Field. I observe while thus employed that some among the guests shudder and turn pale, and Miss Pinner, gently pressing my arm, says, "Major, you're positively too awful! Pray don't."

This is not the first time that the graphic force of my narratives has met with such flattering recognition, although my letters may not be thought to be worthy of insertion in the *Times* by those in power in Printing House Square.

After dinner Miss Pinner retires to Mrs. Dozer's private parlour, where I presently follow her. Upon my entrance I am under the impression that she is asleep, but she says she was only thinking. As is, I presume, usual under such circumstances, I say, "Of what?" She says, "I was trying to remember how many steps there were up to the top of the Monument."

After this we sit hand in hand for a time, silently. Then suddenly the Boots opens the door.

"Some ladies want to see you, Major," says the Boots. "They say their name is Penny."

The deuce they do! It's the Girls!

\* \* \* \* \*

This really is most unreasonable conduct on the part of the Girls. Indeed, I call it scarcely delicate; and so I'll tell them when——

They are in the dining-room, sitting in a row, and



This Girls assembled.

on their faces is an expression indicative of the deepest anxiety. As I enter they rise simultaneously, and then one at a time, according to seniority, fall upon my neck and sob.

I say, "Don't make a scene! What the deuce is the matter?"

Bathsheba says, "Why did you keep it a secret from us?"

What does she mean? I somehow feel what I have heard described as sneaky. I trust I don't also look it. "But," I say, "it has been nothing serious."

"Oh, do not say that!" cries Cassandra; "in a question of the heart——"

"What do you mean by the heart?" I say. "The heart, had nothing whatever to do with it."

"Oh, brother! brother!" cry all the Girls in chorus. "This is unworthy of you; but may you be happy

with her. *We* have done our best ; but that is past and gone. We are only in the way—now."

\* \* \* \* \*

I do really think this is most unseemly on the part of the Girls. At their time of life they ought to know better.

There is not room for them at Dozer's, which is just now choke-full, so they have gone to another hotel near at hand, and in the morning I suppose I had better introduce them to Jemima.

It may possibly be rather a shock to them to know that Miss Pinner's name is Jemima. Not only because the names in our family have hitherto had a more elevated and ornamental turn about them (according to *some* tastes), but also because there has already been a Jemima connected with our family, who turned out disastrously. Indeed, she married the Twopenny, and was the mother of The Twins !

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a knock at the door. Another visitor for me. This time my old friend and companion-in-arms, Captain Pincher.

Pincher apologizes for intruding (I do not disguise from him the fact that, to a certain extent, I look upon his visit in that light), and says that he came up in the same train with the Girls, and that he had endeavoured to reach my hotel first, to warn me I was to be taken by surprise.

"Confound it, sir !" I cry, "the behaviour of those Girls is altogether preposterous."

"It is, sir," says Pincher, shaking hands with me warmly.



Putting it to Pincher.

\* \* \* \* \*

Pincher is not such a fool as I took him for. I will introduce him to Jemima.

I have. He takes her hand—both hands. He kisses her.

"I say, look here——"

"My dear young lady, I am delighted to make your acquaintance," he says; "and yours too, madam" (to Mrs. Dozer). "Your future husband, ma'am" (still to Mrs. Dozer), "is the oldest friend I have in the world."

Then aside to me: "How old is the daughter? She is a fine girl."



## CHAPTER VI.

## THEY ARE BETROTHED.

THEY have met.

The Girls and Miss Pinner have had an interview, and I am not sorry it is over.

It occurred this morning. The Girls entered, as it were, to slow music, and formed a group. Then Miss Pinner was sent for. "My dear, my sisters," I said, and the Girls replied in chorus, "We are very gratified to make your acquaintance," and all three stretched out their right hands stiffly.

There is something singularly firm and resolute about the Girls since this interview, and they act and speak in concert, as though they were clockwork. It is confoundedly absurd of them, and I wish they wouldn't.

Miss Pinner remarks it too, and says, "Are they always like that? How funny!"

I do really wish to goodness the Girls wouldn't. It is not a pleasant thing for the members of one's family to present themselves in a humorous light to future members, and go on like Jacks-in-boxes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another day has passed ; we have been betrothed now more than thirty-six hours. The sensation is remarkable, and probably is pleasurable also when one gets more used to it. At present, however, it is rather like acting a play, and there is more drawing up in rows and taking front places, so to speak, among

the other guests at the hotel than I quite care for; and between ourselves, I don't mind owning that I've pretty well had enough of everybody's congratulations.

Why, confound it all, old Dozer himself has been at it! The Male Dozer, I mean. Though I have scarcely ever exchanged a word with him since I've been in the house, he has had the audacity to dig me, Major Penny, in the ribs, and call me, Major Penny, a sly dog!

"Sir!" I ejaculate.



"We're worth all the young 'uns put together, aren't we, Major?"

"Ah!" Dozer Male goes on, with a feeble chuckle, "we're worth all the young 'uns put together, aren't we, Major?"

This is almost comic of Dozer Male. From sheer absurdity I cannot very well take offence at it, so I let Dozer Male go on chuckling, and treat him with the contempt he deserves.

\* \* \* \* \*



It is remarkable how calmly Miss Pinner takes it all. To look at her one would imagine she had been betrothed all her life—had, so to speak, starred in the part all round the provinces.

In my own mind I had formed certain resolutions with regard to the marriage and honeymoon. I had fixed upon some quiet City church—I don't care to be made a show of—and a month at some peaceful village on the coast of Devon (I hate your vulgar, crowded sea-side places) would be delightful!

But it would appear that Miss Pinner has also got her views upon the subject.

"There is only one way of spending a honeymoon properly," she says, "and that is by making a tour through Europe."

There is a sense of wideness and space, not to mention the money it would come to, about this idea that takes my breath away. Yet, if she has really set her heart upon it, and Cook and those other people does these things so much cheaper nowadays—

"But," she continues—it seems she has not finished the sentence yet—"there is no necessity for such extravagance, and it would be a much wiser course, it seems to me, to spend the money upon our house, for you know there will be so many things wanted."

This is really most considerate, and, indeed, most remarkable on the part of Miss Pinner, and, as well as I am able to judge, wholly unprecedented on the part of so young a woman, under such circumstances.

In other respects, also, Miss Pinner is remarkable. I had had my doubts respecting the way things should be arranged after the honeymoon, as far as our future

home is concerned. Of course the Girls, who have previously shared my home with me, cannot be turned adrift. That is certain. But at the same time it is also certain that Mrs. Major Penny that is to be will not be able to share my home with the Girls.

It is true that as yet there has been no bloodshed, but Miss Pinner and the Girls occupy a position towards each other just now which leaves much to be desired.

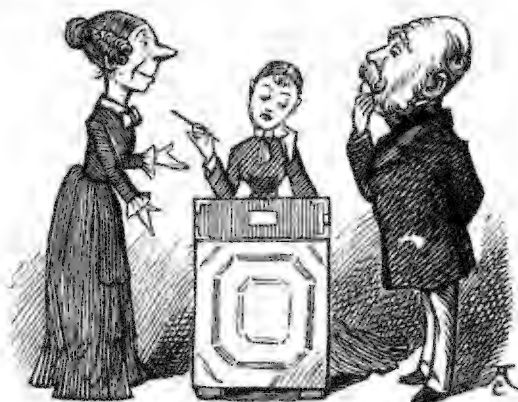
Not being able to speak from personal experience, and Pincher being also ignorant on the point, I can't quite decide how a betrothed couple are supposed to spend their time. I have hitherto been under the impression that they wandered about hand in hand, and sat together a long while silently with hands clasped, but I don't think Miss Pinner is that kind of girl.



*The Calculating Girl.*

On the contrary, she is as a rule absorbed in arith-

metic. She sends to upholsterers for their price lists and makes a study of them. All by herself she attends sales, and annotates her catalogue. She says it will be a useful check against imposition when we begin buying.



Cocker's a fool to it.

"Look at her, Major," says Mrs. Dozer, with enthusiasm; "there's sums for you! there's addition, subtraction, long division. Why, Cocker's a fool to it!"

Mrs. Dozer is a well-meaning woman, but wanting in delicacy, sometimes.

"She'll look after you, Major," Dozer Male also observes later on, "same as my missus has me. They all do it, sir! It's right they ought."

\* \* \* \* \*

Perhaps, by the way, it is time to begin to buy things, instead of only looking at them being bought by other people. I have now decided on leaving the Girls the house we have hitherto occupied, and taking

a small cottage or villa myself somewhere in a genteel suburb. I mention the fact to Miss Pinner.

"I have thought of that," she says, "and have written to most of the house agents. Do you care for this style?"



*The style.*

The style is neat and plain—very much so, indeed; and it is also small and compact.

"It is scarcely picturesque," I venture to observe; "but with a Virginia creeper or some clematis——"

"They harbour earwigs, I am told," she replies.

"Then we won't have them," I cry, kissing the hand in which she holds the picture. "And it *is* compact and snug: it shall be our little nest, and we will be the little birds to roost in it. I'll take it at once."

"Had you not better have in a surveyor first?" says Miss Pinner.



## CHAPTER VII.

## HE NAMES THE DAY.

THERE are several quiet churches still existing in the City.

There is Saint Canker-in-the-Close, and Saint Creeper in Backslider Street, and several others, but I have given the preference to Saint Starvus-cum-Bagabones, and that's where I intend the ceremony to take place.

Saint Starvus is round a corner down a crooked lane, which on a week-day is blocked up by heavy waggons, and is full of strange noises, the shouting of men, the clatter of horses' hoofs, the creaking of cranes, and the rattling of chains.

But on Sunday a surprising calm pervades the neighbourhood, which, however, can scarcely be called holy, because nobody thereabouts goes to church. They do not toll a bell at Saint Starvus's, either because they do not think it necessary or because they have not got one.

There is a parson laid on, who comes there when he is well enough, and a mysterious official, who is supposed to be the verger, and who is also the clerk; and there is an opener of pews, whose place, as far as the opening is concerned, is a sinecure.

As regards the reliable congregation. He is one in number. He attends regularly, fair weather or foul, and sits in the free seats and listens meekly when

there is anything to listen to, or meekly takes himself off again after waiting half an hour or so on those occasions when the pastor does not put in an appearance.

Two or three old ladies, believed to be stone deaf, and a boy of empty mind, collect together within the old venerable pile from time to time, but they cannot be relied on.

The congregation, therefore, can only be fairly reckoned as one in number—a doddering old gentleman who was born and brought up in the crooked lane at a house pulled down long ago to make way for a many-storied building, in front of which waggons load and unload all day long ; and now he comes from a distance to listen to the same pastor under whom he has sat for over half a century.

It is my intention that the wedding ceremony shall be as private as possible, and I rather fancy I have hit upon a tolerably sneaky place for it to occur in.



Talking it over.

I am happy to say that my choice has met with the approval of Miss Pinner, and that she is quite agreed with me that we will have no tomfoolery. We have talked the matter over; she sitting on the arm of my chair and listening attentively. She says—

"It is not particularly romantic, but it is the proper view to take of the thing. We will put on our oldest clothes, and if it rains I can wear my waterproof and goloshes. Won't that be jolly?"

I don't know that we need actually go to such extremes as these suggested, but I certainly see no occasion to make a mountebank of oneself.

"We will go out as usual without saying a word to any of them," I say, "and drop in and get it over. Then drop down the river (the steamboat pier is quite close too) and stop, say, a couple of days at Gravesend."

"Or Greenwich," says Miss Pinner, "which is nearer, and the fare considerably less."

"Well, as to that," I say, gently patting her on the head—upon my soul she is the most thoughtful little woman alive—"we won't consider a trifle of that kind upon such an occasion."

\* \* \* \* \*

Before taking any decisive steps in the matter, when I have named the day (Miss Pinner said I had better name it), I go down to Saint Starvus's and reconnoitre. I ascertain that the keys of the church are kept at a shoemaker's in the next street, and find that the shoemaker, who is also clerk and verger, has gone out, and is not expected home for some hours. If, however, it is any business about the church, Mrs. Shoemaker tells

me, I had better see him at the church next day, which is Sunday.



The Verger.

On Sunday I go to Saint Starvus's about half an hour before morning service, and interview the verger. He opens his eyes very widely when I tell him that I require a marriage ceremony as soon as it can conveniently be performed.

He says, "Is the lady your daughter?"

I reply, not without some excusable indignation, "Certainly not, sir. No relation at all."

Presently it dawns on him that it is my own marriage I am speaking of, and he then tells me that he has no doubt but that it will be all right, but there has not been a marriage at Saint Starvus's for more than twenty years.

\* \* \* \* \*

The preliminary arrangements have been made.



The banns have been put up, and I have reason to believe we have been asked in church on three consecutive Sundays, although I have not been to Saint Starvus's to hear. And now the day has arrived.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was really a splendid notion of mine. I steal away after breakfast, according to previous arrangement, and rush to the church in a cab, where presently, also by previous arrangement, Miss Pinner is to meet me. I give the cabman a shilling more than his fare. One is not married every day. The cabman pockets it without any outward manifestation of feeling. He *does* drive a cab every day.

I pick my way among the waggons, chuckling (not a soul notices me), and reach the church. On my way I meet the verger, and a youthful curate, laid on for



The Curate.

the occasion, who is to adjust the noose—I mean tie the knot. He seems awestricken on hearing who I am, and shakes hands with me as the Ordinary at Newgate might do on a dissimilar occasion. And here we are at the church—good gracious!

A perfect mob await me on the steps. I am absolutely cheered.

I have a good mind to run away, but how can I do so when I expect Miss Pinner to arrive every moment? Instead, I dash through the mob, and plunging into a high pew, throw myself upon a seat and pant.



Hounded down.

But even here I am not safe from the rabble. They crowd round and point at me, and talk about me as though I were part of a waxworks. Presently some one breathes upon my crown and taps me on the shoulder, and a voice I know says:

"You're an old slyboots, aren't you? We all knew it. We're all here."

It is the Male Dozer. Nobody would believe such a thing; but the Male Dozer is the one regular congregation, and it was his marriage that was the last solemnized at St. Starvus-cum-Bagobones.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THEY MARRY HIM.

THE statement made by the Male Dozer is in a measure correct. The greater part of the people from the hotel are already in the church, and, as I glare affrightedly around, half a score of heads nod at me, and imbecile smiles greet me on every side.

I do not smile. On the contrary, my face wears an expression which I trust is sufficient to show that I am far from being gratified by their uncalled-for attendance at what I had intended should be a private wedding.

Meanwhile, what the deuce has become of Miss Pinner?

If by any possible chance Miss Pinner should not—  
But, no! I can't entertain an idea so horrible for a moment.

Meanwhile the mob appear to fancy there is a chance of something of the kind occurring, and whisper and giggle a good bit among themselves.

This is rapidly becoming unbearable. What's that?

Cheers! Loud cheers in the lane without! Intense excitement within, and murmurs of "Here she is! Here she is!"

Naturally I go forward to meet her, but as my eyes fall upon her I almost lose my equilibrium. She is not wearing her old clothes. There are no signs of the waterproof, and the goloshes are not there.

On the contrary, she is attired in white. A wreath of orange-blossoms and a long lace veil take the place of the baby bonnet I had wooed and won her in, if I may be pardoned the poetic imagery.

My first feeling is that of indignation—my next of pride. Jemima is unquestionably sweetly pretty thus attired, and you will allow it is a trying dress for the generality of girls.

I may incidentally mention that white hardly suits *the Girls*—Bathsheba, Cassandra, and Ursula—who it would appear are going to be bridesmaids.

"You won't be angry with me," Jemima says in a low tone, hastily. "They had made the dress, and made me put it on. It would have been absurd to make a fuss about it, and besides, I might as well try to do you credit."

She is the most wonderful matter-of-fact little woman on the face of the earth.

"Under the circumstances it must be allowed," I begin to say; but the clerk says—

"Now, sir, please, it's getting' late. Are you quite ready?"

\* \* \* \* \*

In another five minutes we are half married. In another ten the ceremony is complete, and our names are in the register. Shortly afterwards we are in the street, where the rabble await us. As well as I can make out by one hasty glance around, I am inclined to believe that all the warehousemen in the big buildings within miles have struck work and assembled to see the sight. Fortunately, somebody has got the cab—no, it is a brougham, it seems—close up to the church, several waggons having moved out of the way to give it room; and, as soon as it can be managed, I get Miss—I mean Mrs. Major Penny—into it and follow myself, the mob, meanwhile, cheering tremendously, which they continue to do for the next three or four minutes, whilst our coachman has a verbal row with a carman, just arrived on the scene, and persisting in blocking up the road.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are free at length, and on our way home to the hotel. There is breakfast waiting for us, it would appear. Speeches, too, most likely. I can't help shuddering a little when I think of it, but Mrs. Major Penny says—

"After all, it won't last for ever. They won't want to spend the honeymoon with us, I suppose!"

\* \* \* \* \*

The breakfast is over. The wedding-cake—there is

a wedding-cake, if you please—has been cut, with the ordinary attendant ceremonies, and the speeches have set in with severity.



Dozer Male at it.

At the present moment Dozer Male is on his legs. I can't exactly say what he is talking about, and I don't think he exactly knows himself; but he mentions, among other things, that though he has not known me all his life, he never met with a man he was more proud to know. He also adds that his experience of the married state has been satisfactory. He doesn't know what he would have done had he not met with Mrs. Dozer, and all he can say is he hopes Mrs. Dozer's niece will prove a second Mrs. Dozer to his friend and companion in arms, if he may be allowed the expression, Major Penny.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have replied. I am back in my seat again, with

a strong consciousness of having been confoundedly ridiculous and utterly irrelevant, and now old Pincher is at it about the Bridesmaids.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is all over!

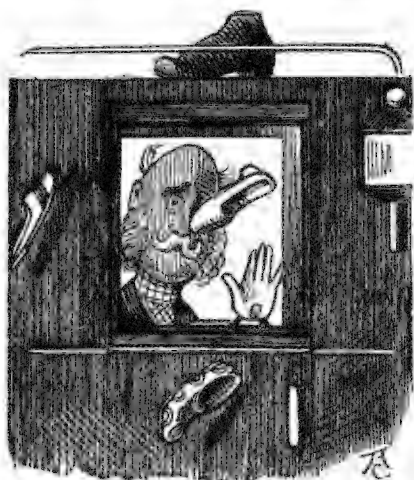


Pincher : his Tear.

It is absolutely all over at last, and I have shaken hands with Pincher, who wrings mine silently and sheds a tear, and the Girls are all weeping, and about twenty persons of both sexes have kissed Mrs. Major Penny (I don't know how long that sort of thing is expected to go on), and we are in the cab ready to start. Oh!

\* \* \* \* \*

It's a shoe! Confound such tomfoolery! but I suppose I ought to smile and pretend I rather liked that one on the nose!



Throwing the Slipper.

How long is the ass of a driver going to be before he starts? They'll have our lives, or break a window directly!

---

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE HONEYMOONS.

I SHOULD feel much obliged if anybody would kindly inform me why the deuce I (Major Penny) should be expected to know anything about Slocum Podger, either in or out of season.

My acquaintance with Slocum Podger has been of



brief duration, and it shall not, if I have my way, be greatly prolonged.

It would appear that Slocum Podger has a season some time or other, and that this time is not that time.

When I ask the landlady whether there were many visitors at Slocum Podger just now, she says, "No, sir; we're very quiet."

Facts that have subsequently come to light prove Mrs. Major Penny and myself to be the only two.

We sought for a quiet place! We have surely got it then, you say.

Have we? That's all you know!

It has been observed by somebody that there is no solitude like that to be found in a crowd. That man had probably had his turn of trying to get round a quiet corner at Slocum Podger.

But there is no quiet corner to get round. The eye of Slocum Podger is for ever on you, and it is an eager and a hungry eye.



"Go for a sail, sir?"

The one aim and object of the native of Slocum Podger is to hound you down and take you for a drive or a sail, or urge you on to row yourself, or to sell you new milk from the cow (throwing in the cow as a kind of novel source of milk just discovered), or to thrust shell-pincushions on you; and the last attempt has been that of a blear-eyed boy who has followed us a mile out of the town to sell us a cocoanut.

We take the parlours at the bow-windowed house at the end of the Terrace (which commands a sea-view), and take them at the landlady's own price. I tell her that as an old soldier I like punctuality and regularity. I mention the hour at which I am accustomed to dine, and the hour when I require the breakfast and lunch to be upon the table. I interrogate her respecting the aspect of her house, and finding her vague upon the subject, set her right. I suggest a few alterations in the disposal of the furniture, and



*Her Smile.*

request that the clock upon the mantelpiece, which is absurdly incorrect, shall be removed; and her presence being no longer required, I mention the fact.

But she does not retire. On the contrary, she falls into a pensive attitude and contemplates us with a bland smile. We might be a play got up for her especial amusement.

With withering irony I ask whether she would not like to take a seat. She takes one.

Perhaps it is as well for all parties that at this moment there is a knock at the street door and she goes to answer it. Some one from the Bazaar and Assembly Rooms who wishes to know if the lady and gentleman will do him the honour to inscribe their names in the visitors' list. I see no particular reason why we should not, and Mrs. Major Penny says, "By all means! You sign for both."

Upon this the landlady supplies pens and ink, and I take a seat at the table and lay the volume out before me. It is a brand-new volume, perfectly empty with the exception of two lines, thus:—

### "VISITORS' LIST,"

#### "ARRIVALS."

Below this I add another line:—

"Major Penny and Mrs. Penny, from London."

Meanwhile the landlady is looking on with a smile of much blandness, and receives the book, still smiling, and carries it away.

As from the bow-window I watch its progress up

the road, I observe that the boy carrying it is suddenly waylaid by a bareheaded man in a white apron, having the appearance of a grocer, who reads the entry eagerly, and whilst he is so engaged other persons, having the appearance of a greengrocer and a butcher, join in excitedly, and then all rush off in opposite directions.

Within an hour cards and circulars requesting the honour of Major Penny's patronage have arrived from the local tradesmen, and, with them in my hand, I go forth to order in provisions, accompanied by Mrs. Major Penny, and watched from the door by the landlady, smiling her hardest. Confound that woman's smiling! I hope it won't go on much longer.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

I have nothing particular to urge against Slocum Podger as a bathing-place, only I should be sorry to bathe there myself; nor against it as a pleasure resort, except that as the amusements are limited to an Assembly Room where nobody assembles, but which is, just now, used as a kind of hospital for invalid perambulators and Bath-chairs that have gone wrong, I don't think it can be called too gay. As a poor, paltry, bleak, bare, and barren little place, I give Slocum Podger its due, and willingly testify to its openness and airiness; the latter amounting to small hurricanes enough to blow you clean off your feet.

Possibly this wind may add to the appetite of the natives in these parts, and unusual efforts be rendered necessary to procure the means of appeasing the same, and this also may be the reason why, upon the appear-

ance of the first visitors this season, they are remorselessly hounded down.

I have made the necessary purchases, and the local tradesmen watch us from their premises with pensive sadness. I suppose they thought we were going to empty the whole of the shops.

We haven't been here more than a couple of hours, and we have made a deadly enemy of one mariner, who has a boat to let which we will not hire of him. The person at the Bazaar and Assembly Rooms has come forth upon the threshold, again and again, with a wistful smile, and now as we pass her by, for the sixth time, she looks vindictive. The blear-eyed boy with the unsold cocoanut (one of last season's, I'll take my oath) has the aspect of an assassin, and moves his white lips as though invoking maledictions. Two ancient mariners, with one telescope between



Spotting the Fair.

them, follow us steadily for over an hour, and, at intervals, offer the loan of the telescope, putting forth

fresh arguments, each time, to prove that not to borrow their telescope (for the price of a pint) and spot uninteresting objects far away, is to miss the one aim and object a reasonable being cares to go on living for.

We have had our dinner to a smiling accompaniment from the landlady, who never leaves us, and now in the moonlight we have wandered out upon the pier, and are, for the first time, alone, on this the evening of the day of our wedding.



Blessed calm at last.

The natives retire early at Slocum Podger, it would seem, and the town lies silently in the pale moonlight afar off, a tiny light twinkling here and there in the upper windows.

Nothing but the faint plashing of the waves against the green and time-worn woodwork below us, breaks

the sweet calm. Nothing else but—a pair of heavy boots approaching from the distance.

The boots draw nearer. Their owner comes in sight, reaches us, and pulls up short.

He is the owner of a fishing-smack, and is going fishing by moonlight. It is now nearly eleven. He proposes to remain fishing till five in the morning, and he came out of his way up the pier because it occurred to him we should like to be of the party, and pay him half a crown for the privilege.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### SHE IS PRACTICAL.

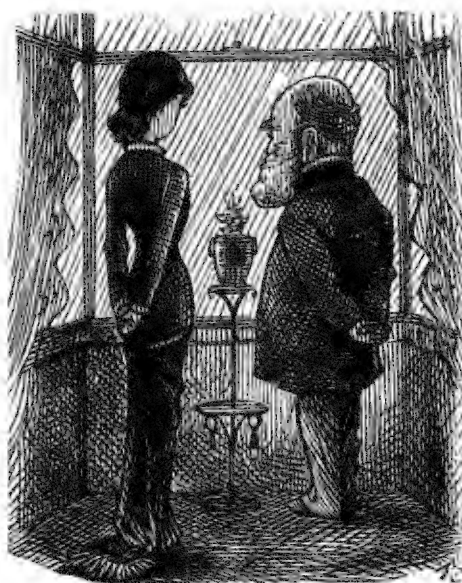
IT is possible that under conditions even less favourable than one's honeymoon Slocum Podger might be found enduring—as long as it didn't rain.

It may be urged by the unreflective that a wet day can make but little difference to a couple honeymooning. That shows what the unreflective know about it!

\* \* \* \* \*

It is raining hard just now at Slocum Podger.

\* \* \* \* \*



It rains.

From the bow-window of my parlour I can see far away to the right and to the left, up and down the long, straggling, one-sided street which forms the centre of traffic and commerce of Slocum Podger, and, with the exception of somebody in a white apron, peeping timidly from a shop door (doubtless the shop-keeper, who has nothing else to do), there is no sign of life.

Stay! there is a stray dog a long way off in the opposite direction. A dog of wobegone aspect sitting shivering under the shelter of the sea-wall, and hanging down his head as though in thought.

The rain falls steadily, swelling the puddles in the middle of the road, drifting with a dreary sound against the window-panes. A water-pipe close by,



communicating with the roof of the house, keeps up a constant dribble, which is a dismal thing to listen to for long at a time.

Mrs. Penny has brought down some needlework. It is a blue cloth petticoat, and she is sewing a button on it with a businesslike air.

I cannot exactly say why, but this act on the part of Mrs. Penny, on the third day after our wedding, strikes me as singularly unsentimental.

I don't say so, however. I only say, "Busy, eh?"

She says, "I must do something," and threads a needle.

I take a seat upon the sofa by her side. She moves an inch or two, possibly to make room for me, only there is plenty of room. I take the hem of the petticoat in my hand, and she pulls it very gently, but hard enough to pull it away, and says, "You mustn't touch."

Then we sit silently for a time, and then I put my arm round her waist, on which she gives my hand a prick with her needle—a good sharp prick, which makes me cry "Oh!"

On which she says, "I hope I didn't hurt you." On which I say, "No; it's nothing!" feeling bound to treat the matter thus, though it aches for an hour afterwards.

In the meanwhile Mrs. Penny goes on sewing on the button, after having placed her work-basket between us; and I go on looking on at a respectful distance, and the rain goes on raining, and, altogether, it is not quite as gay as it might be.

The question is, when it is raining at Slocum Podger, how do lodgers, who do not happen to be honeymooning, spend their time? Supposing now, for instance, that I were an old married man—I mean, of course, a man who had been married some time—what should I do at the present moment? The answer naturally occurs to one.

Seize an umbrella, and at all risks seek the parLOUR of the nearest inn. But, under present circumstances, that would hardly be the proper thing to do. Let me rather turn my attention to indoor occupations of a recreative character. What is there, now?

I don't like to propose scratch-cradle, as I somehow fancy Mrs. Penny would think it frivolous.

Thank goodness! Lunch!

\* \* \* \* \*

It is my firm impression, though, I do not care to mention it to Mrs. Penny (on the third day of one's honeymoon one scarcely wishes to go into these kind of details), that that Cheshire cat of a landlady calmly helps herself to our food in the most barefaced fashion; though she has gone out of her way to provide us with keys which are supposed to lock everything up, safe and sound.

A case in point is the fresh butter. To say that this fragment of a quarter-pound in any way resembles the quarter-pound scarcely touched that left our breakfast-table is simply preposterous; but it would, most assuredly, be so said, and sworn to for that matter, were I to speak to the landlady about it.

And with a bland smile, too, that would add insult

to the injury. What that woman can see to grin at is a thing I have frequently asked myself in vain. Possibly from some point of view my aspect as the husband of Mrs. Penny may present itself in a ridiculous light to this woman, but I confess I don't see it, and, what is more certain still, I certainly don't like this grinning.

Upon one thing I am, however, quite determined. I will prove the dishonesty of this landlady beyond doubt, and I will—if I may be pardoned the phrase, which I admit has somewhat of a melodramatic turn—fling it in her teeth!



The Major makes his mind up.

The process necessary is a simple one. With an ordinary pin, such as you get a row of instead of the odd farthing at linendrapers' shops, a secret mark shall be made upon the side of the butter that has been cut. If when the butter is again brought forth from its

cupboard the secret mark is still there, it is to be supposed that a robbery has not been committed. We shall see!

After lunch, whilst Mrs. Penny is putting on her bonnet (it has left off raining a little, and we have determined to get as far as the Bazaar, if we can possibly manage it), I mark the butter, and, locking the cupboard, deposit the key in a hiding-place known only to myself.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have been to the Bazaar, and stopped there as long as we decently could (it came on raining again directly we crossed the threshold), and have come back, and I have sought the nearest inn alone, with the intention of tasting their sherry and bitters before dinner.

\* \* \* \* \*

The nearest inn is a paltry place, and the sherry and bitters well worthy of it. I have come back again now, and am waiting for dinner.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here it is at last, and here is the butter! Now, upon my word this really beats anything I ever came across!

Not only has a great lump of butter disappeared, but I'll be hanged if there are not a lot of pin-marks all over it, apparently imitations, or I might call them gross caricatures, of those I made.

Naturally I can't stand this, and I give the bell a great pull. The landlady is dishing up the dinner and sends up the girl. In a voice of thunder I demand to

know who has been at the butter, and she says she doesn't know, but will inquire.



"I'll ask missus."

Whilst she has gone to do so, Mrs. Penny comes down, and asks what is the matter.

"Nothing, my dear," I reply, "but it is really too disgraceful!"

"Have they been at it again?" she inquires.

"At what?" I ask, supposing, of course, she does not know what I am referring to.

"No," she continues, without waiting for my reply, "the marks are just as I left them. It's all right."

"Have you too marked the butter, then?" I gasp.

"Yes," she says; "I had a bit of bread and butter when you were out, and marked it afterwards."

"But I had the key."

"Oh, I found that."



More *at* *business*.

Surely there are times, upon the Ensanguined Field and elsewhere, when even those among us who are possessed of the readiest flow of language may lack words with which to give expression to sentiments that seem to fill the labouring breast to overflowing.

Is it possible for a woman to be too practical, I wonder? It seems to jar on one, this notion of marking the butter on the third day of a honeymoon.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here's the landlady now, and *not* grinning this time. She looks very serious, and wants to know what I mean.



## CHAPTER XI

## THEY RETURN

HANG this butter business!

There is nothing at all of a buttery expression, so to speak, about the landlady's face as she asks me what is the matter, and whether I have anything to complain of.

By a happy inspiration, as I don't happen to be in a position to complain, I resolve upon laying the blame on the girl, and pretend that she did not understand what I said. Poor girl! but it can't be helped.

The landlady says, "I suppose the housekeeping comes strange to you at first, Major? You ought to leave it to your good lady. Oughtn't he, ma'am?"

This is a kind of woman you cannot quell with an imperious glance. On the contrary, she laughs if you fix her, and, as likely as not, gives you a nudge if you don't see the joke quickly enough.

No one would credit what a nuisance this woman's perpetual grinning has become, and how persistently she keeps it up. If, for instance, I diffidently go marketing and buy a chicken, which may be a trifle skinnier than could be desired, she will ask, "What might you have given for that now, sir?" and on my telling her, she will say, "That's all a chicken, that is!" and sit down and hold her sides and laugh for five minutes.

Again, if I sally forth and return triumphantly, followed by a boy carrying an uncommonly fine cabbage

in a basket, her mirth is unbounded. She gathers up the cabbage, weighs it in both hands, bangs it down, and cries out loud enough for the whole street to hear, "Well, I'm sure! If this ain't a cabbage, and no mistake. Took two on you to bring it home, and no wonder!"

To sum this woman up, she is perpetually, everlastingly on the giggle, and watches my every movement in a way that is beyond measure exasperating—to such an extent, indeed, that knowing, when approaching the house and yet afar off, she is lying in wait for me behind a curtain, I feel for all the world as though I were making my *début* at a Theatre Royal, with the critics assembled in front, and have to take care my toes are properly turned out, and that my arms are swinging easily, which I am conscious they are not, and I'll be hanged if I can help it.

In point of fact, I don't care how soon the week is over and we get back to town, where possibly we may be left to ourselves and not worried quite so much.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the final arrangements relative to the furnishing of the semi-detached villa (Plantagenet House, Little Battle of Bosworth Field Road East, Upper Straggleton, S.W.) are progressing rapidly. The Girls, acting under my instructions (I have laid in a couple of dozen post-cards, and drop one into the box whenever anything occurs to me), are seeing to the details, and the result, if my directions are properly carried out, will be calculated to surprise.

\* \* \* \* \*



Thank goodness the week has actually come to an end, and we leave this very day!

On asking for my bill, Mrs. Cheshire Cat says, "You *do* make me laugh, sir."

I reply sarcastically, "Some people possibly see more to laugh at than other people?"

"Yes," she says, "if they let lodgings. Oh, my! you *are* a funny one!" and then she nearly goes into hysterics.

It is really hardly worth noticing a woman of this kind, so I merely tell her I should like the bill at her earliest convenience, and as she has taken a seat in my parlour to have her laugh out, I put on my hat and go for a walk till she has had it.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are packed up, and the bill is paid. I must confess that on auditing the same I was almost disappointed at not being able to question any of the items, and Mrs. Cheshire receiving payment passes over the odd sixpence in the total with "Never mind that, sir! I'm sure it's done me several sixpences-worth of good, and that's the truth. He! he! ha! ha! ha! Oh! my poor side!" etc.—*ad nauseam*.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are actually off. The fly is here. The Cheshire is on the doorstep grinning harder than ever. And what at? I ask you as calmly as I can, "What at?"

\* \* \* \* \*

We have quitted Slocum Podger.

To the best of my belief, the greater part of the inhabitants assembled to see us out of the town, and appeared, if anything, much more pleased we are going than they were when we arrived. The boy with the cocoanut (the cocoanut still on him, as well as I can see, yet unsold) beaming in the background.

"Thank goodness that's over," I say, with a sigh of relief, as the train starts.

"Yes," says Mrs. Penny.

\* \* \* \* \*

In town at last. In the cab. On the way to Upper Straggleton, a rising suburb with pretensions; only up to now rather unfinished and a trifle damp.

At Upper Straggleton. In the Battle of Bosworth Field Road. In front of Plantagenet House.

"Hullo! there they are! That's him! That's her! Hooray!"

A tumultuous welcome awaits us.

The Girls are there upon the doorstep in a row.

So are the Twins!

Deuce take those Twins. It is not holiday-time. What does it mean?

"What are those?" asks Mrs. Penny, indicating the Twopenny division with a forefinger ruthlessly pointed thereat.

I don't believe I ever—indeed, on reflection, I am quite certain—I never yet have properly explained the Twins' existence.

This is, to put it mildly, rather lively.

## CHAPTER XII.

## HE HAS A TIME OF IT.

THE Girls are drawn up in a row to receive us, and the Twins are all over the place, going on tumultously. Mrs. Penny does not appear to be too delighted to find the Girls in a row, and is even less pleased by the Twins' demonstration.

I hastily explain that the Twins are of no consequence, only being nephews, and not in any way attached to the establishment; being rather, if anything, a portion of a Welcoming Ceremony that might, under other circumstances, have had a backing-up of arches and flags with appropriate devices, and firearms at intervals.

She says, "They are very like you."

As a matter of fact, they do not resemble me in the least, and nothing could well annoy me more than their presence; but I hardly see why I should be hunted into a corner, as it were, upon the subject.

As we approach the door the Girls cluster round and clutch at Mrs. Penny, who, it seems to me, bobs her head systematically, and passes, so to speak, unscathed through the ordeal, whilst the Girls (in a row) rub their noses where Mrs. Penny's bonnet and feather have caught them right and left, and blink and smile, tearfully.

Meanwhile, however, the Twins have been watching their opportunity, and close with Mrs. Penny, at

whom from a polished hall chair (they don't mind the polish a bit) they take flying leaps and kiss with fury.

I say sternly, "Boys, behave yourselves!"

Instead of doing so they charge me impetuously—so that half my time I am uncertain whether I am standing on my head or my heels—and yell in chorus, "Brayvo, Nunky! Gi' us a shillin'!"



Sportiveness.

"Good boys," I say, feeling as though I should like to smack their heads for them, but, at the same time, conscious of their meaning well, though not quite knowing how to express themselves. "Keep quiet for a moment, and I——"

Here one Twin butts at me with his head in a lower waistcoat button, whilst the other charges me from the rear. "Good boys, that'll do!"

"That's new auntie, ain't it?" they shout in chorus (they're always in chorus, it seems to me). "Gi' us a kiss, new auntie."

"Go away! do!" responds new auntie.

"Go away. Leave go of your aunt!" I thunder. On which they beat a retreat of a yard or two and cheer.

The Girls, still rubbing their noses, form a tearful little procession to the parlour, and Bathsheba, the eldest, says, "Welcome home!"

The little parlour is brand new and awfully prim, and the chairs set round the walls give it much of the appearance of the first class ladies' waiting-room at a small railway station. The crowd lends itself to this fancy, and our carpet bags heighten the effect.

The room, indeed, is very crowded by the three Girls, Mrs. Penny, myself, and the servant, without counting the Twins, who jostle each other fiercely in the doorway.

If somebody would only get out of the way! I feel as though I should like to take a chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have had tea and ham and eggs. The Girls decided that this would be preferable to dinner after our journey. I don't know why it should be, but we have it, and say it is very nice. Meanwhile the Twins have a game in the room overhead, which threatens every now and then to bring down the chandelier.

I break it mildly to the Girls that we could have done without the Twins upon an occasion like this, and ask when they are going. At this Cassandra's feelings (it was her notion, it appears) are hurt, and she says, "Brother, if I had only known, I would not have suggested it. But it is natural you should be changed now."

I say, "I don't know about changed, but they make such a confounded row."

Cassandra says, "You would not have thought so once, Brother."

I don't argue the point, but go to look at my Bradshaw for the next train that will take the Twins back to their school, which is about twenty miles off.

In the passage I find them waiting for me, and they shout in chorus—

"Nunky, come and look at the back garding."

I am on the point of telling them I haven't time, when they suddenly seize on me, one on each side, and absolutely run me out, and down one gravel walk and half up another before I can shake myself free. Then, asking them how they dare, I turn upon my heel and retrace my steps to the house. Turning suddenly at the door, however, I discover that they have been following in Indian file, as it is called, taking what is



Want of Respect.

commonly known as a "Snook" behind me. (*Vide Illustration.*) On which I shake my fist at them, and



The Threat.

they take more "snooks" and dance *can-can* steps of a derisive character.



The Defiant Attitude.

Feeling that such conduct calls for immediate action on my part, I make a dash, and vainly endeavour to grapple with an illusive Twin, who escapes across the

centre flower-bed and dodges me round a laurel ; whilst the other Twin harasses me from the rear, and calls out "Yah !"

In the midst of this, casting my eyes towards our back parlour window, I observe Mrs. Penny looking on with a placid smile, and I, at the same moment, become conscious of the neighbours' heads at the windows of the adjoining houses.

The neighbours also appear to be much amused.

I am glad they are.

I am also glad Mrs. Penny is amused.

But I don't intend to go on making an exhibition of myself to please anybody.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have given up this unseemly struggle, and am looking for the train in the Bradshaw.

There is not another to-night.

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

### HE SHOWS THE WAY.

IT is next morning.

The last thing overnight the rain came pouring down in torrents, and as there are never any cabs to be had in this rising suburb when the weather is at all



unfavourable, I was obliged to ask the Girls to stop and sleep.

My roof also sheltered the Twins, but I have no reason for supposing that *they* slept. As the church clock just at the back of us struck two (about as loud as Big Ben, heard as from the top of Westminster Abbey—we shall have no occasion for a clock of our own), the merry game of Bolsters was at its height. As the quarter chimed I was returning breathless from the scene of conflict with what was left of the bolsters.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is next morning. The Girls have taken charge of the Twins, and all the five have left the premises. I have opened all the windows, and Clarissa, the servant the Girls engaged for us, is brushing up crumbs.

I presume it would be premature to form any decided judgment respecting Clarissa's capabilities, and hasty of me, at this moment, to rush at the conclusion that the Girls engaged her solely upon account of her name, which certainly stands out strongly against *Jemima*, the simple appellation belonging to Mrs. Penny.

Clarissa (she tells me that at home they call her "*Issa* for short") is a willing girl, with a temper not easily ruffled, and she says she will be glad to learn anything. At the present moment she knows nothing whatever, so there is, seemingly, a chance for any one, with some spare time on his hands, to bring that girl up in the way she should go.

She also adds that when she gets used to our ways things will come easier. Meanwhile she has been an

hour and a quarter brushing up crumbs, which when brushed up she deposits in the dust-shovel on the hall table, and I knock them down and scatter them again, whilst tightening an adjacent hat-peg.

When I have got the majority of them together (I confess that, finding the exertion of stooping a little disagreeable, after a time I hustled a certain portion of the crumbs into a corner, and covered them over with a mat), I call to Clarissa and reason with her gently on slovenliness, as a vice that should be grappled with in good time, and not allowed to become a part of her nature.

I then show her the purposes to which the hand-brush and long broom are usually applied, and tell her to be sure and miss no corners. On this she makes a dash at the corner where the crumbs are hidden, and I have only time to seize a feather-brush and drag her towards the parlour to prevent her finding it all out. Naturally somewhat nervous for the moment, I take a rather broader sweep with the feather-brush than is necessary to bring down a cobweb which I am drawing Clarissa's attention to; and having my back turned towards the spot at the time, whilst I am addressing Clarissa, I give a plaster bust of myself, perched upon the top of the bookcase, a smart slap on the ear, and bring it crashing to the ground.

It must be recorded to Clarissa's credit that this incident, which I own has a ridiculous side to it that might have been taken hold of, is not so used, but Clarissa, in solemn silence, stoops down and picks up the bits.

Mrs. Penny, attracted by the noise, also appears

upon the scene at the moment when Clarissa is endeavouring to stick my (plaster) nose on again, the wrong end up, and contemplates the catastrophe with considerable serenity.

I confess that there are times when I do not quite understand Mrs. Penny ; and, for instance, at the present moment, I feel that, in her place, she might manifest more excitement, when she sees the property all going to wrack and ruin. I therefore say, "Here's a nice piece of business!"

"Dreadful!" she responds, without the least emphasis. "Which of you did it?"

"Well, as to that," I respond, somewhat impatiently, because I don't see that that is exactly the point at issue—"I did!"

"Oh," she responds, "that was so like you, too."

"Like me!" I say, rather uneasily.

"But perhaps it is not beyond mending still," she continues. "We must try some cement, or perhaps putty would do. Isn't there a bit of the nose end missing?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Clarissa is no cook.

We have had specimens of Clarissa three days running. A joint and a hash and a meat pie have been prepared by Clarissa, and at the present moment I am undecided which was spoilt the most.

Under these circumstances I feel that, if I do not take the matter in hand, we shall soon be reduced to a diet of bread and cheese or sea-biscuits.

In my campaigning days at the Crimea, upon the tented field, my proficiency in the cooking art was the



The Major shows how things should be dusted, and which is the correct way to make a Chokerblacker (as eaten in India).

theme of general conversation, and, on more than one occasion, it was suggested that I and the late Alexis Soyer might advantageously change places, and Soyer go to the front.

Whilst in India, also, it may be mentioned, my preparation of the famous dish, commonly known as *chokerblacker*, was the talk of the army. Why should we not try a *chokerblacker* to-day?

I do not pretend to say that this *chokerblacker* will be quite exactly right, because certain ingredients are necessary for the concoction of the perfect *chokerblacker* which are only to be procured in India itself, and certain herbs should be put into it which are of no use whatever unless fresh gathered.

The things that can be bought in London I set about purchasing, and find that the shops where they are sold are rather scattered, and that the things themselves all come to money. The entire purchases reached the sum of one pound fifteen, and with cab fare and train we arrive at a total of forty shillings; but then, of course, all will not be used up in one dish; we shall have a good stock in hand.

The ceremonies attendant on *chokerblacker* manufacture are elaborate, and Mrs. Penny likens them to an incantation; but it is in every way a success. The only thing wanting, indeed, being a couple of tea-spoonsful of the Penny Sauce—a composition of my own invention, and named after me, of which I have just one bottle left, packed up and brought from my old home by the Girls.

Owing to an accidental jog of the elbow, I put in two table-spoonsful of Penny instead of the proper

quantity, but, after all, one can't have too much of a good thing, and now on goes the saucepan.

\* \* \* \* \*

Repeater in hand, I watch the pot boil, and then pour the contents out in a dish.

"There!" I cry triumphantly, handing Clarissa a large spoonful to taste. "That's cookery, if you like!"

"Do you think this bottle with the Penny Sauce label is all right?" says Mrs. P., a moment later. "Did you notice some one has struck out the words, and written 'Embrocation' underneath?"

Confound those Girls!

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HE PLOTS AND PLANS.

IT may, possibly, be remembered, by those who read these chapters carefully, that an allusion was made in the last chapter but one to a laurel in the back garden.

The article *a* was a mistake on the part of the printer: it should have been *the* laurel. There is only one of him, and he is partially blighted, but is looking up a bit under a regimen prescribed by me (Major Penny), and carried out under my superintendence by Clarissa, the domestic.

As the laurel now stands all by itself, and very much on one side, its appearance is scarcely what could be desired ; but if surrounded by rockwork, and led up to by a serpentine path of bright red gravel, I have every reason to believe it will form a striking ornament, and it will be a pleasant thing to look out at from my library window during intervals of leisure snatched from hours of mental toil.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Upon the idea first occurring to me, I go forth into the garden, take my stand before the laurel, and fix it with my eye ; I then call forth Clarissa, who comes out with a long broom and a dust-shovel, and I send her back with the long broom and dust-shovel, and instruct her to fetch the ball of string.

I then instruct her to hold tight by the ball whilst I walk away, holding an end of the string, which, as I walk, will unroll itself and enable me to take measurements. She, however, maintains such a resolute grip on the ball that, at the end of the first three paces, the end of the string is jerked sharply away from me, and I am left clutching at it wildly, after the manner of Macbeth and the dagger.

Upon this I instruct Clarissa to let the string go more easily, and begin again, and take half a dozen paces, at the end of which the ball flies out of her hands altogether and runs away down the gravel walk, only to be captured by unseemly scrambling.

For the third time, however, I make a fair start, and get twelve or thirteen paces off, when the string suddenly parts company with the ball, owing to a short

length having been added to the main string, and we then essay with varying success several experiments that occur to me, during the course of which, at one period, Clarissa's ankles became so entangled that, called upon suddenly to advance, she does so hopping, not having previously liked to mention what a knot she was getting into.

The neighbours are much amused by these proceedings.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the whole, I am inclined to think that measuring is all foolery. The best thing to do is to draw a plan, and have a man in to carry it out.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have drawn a plan. It took me some time to find a shop in the neighbourhood whereat I could purchase



The plan.

the necessary materials; but it has been done, and the plan is drawn and coloured.



Mrs. Penny says it is colossal. Clarissa holds it upside-down, and seems to think it is intended for a valentine. She asks whether it will go by post.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have, after considerable trouble, found a man who knows all about what he calls "landscape gardening," and I have got him to come and landscape garden our



The Landscape Gardener.

back, as a personal favour, because it is not worth his while to do odd jobs.

He can't come any one of the days I name this week or next, but he looks in one evening at twilight, to get (as he puts it) what is wanted into his head, and he says it is a pity we can't pull the party walls down.

I say I am afraid the tenants on either side might not like that, even if their landlords did not object.

He says, "We shan't be able to make much of a job

of it," he is afraid, and goes away shaking his head despondently.

Three days later I wake up about five, and hear the sound of a pick in the back garden. It is the landscape gardener, who has come early and rung up Clarissa. By the time I reach the field of action he has cut down the laurel.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have had a word or two, and I have shown him the plan, and explained that I desired the laurel to be removed only, and not levelled with the earth. He says I ought to have mentioned it before. I ask whether he can supply me with another laurel, and he says it is not the proper time to plant them, but we can but try. "It *may* grow," he says; "there is no knowing."

I then ask whether he has got the rockwork?

He says, "Oh, you want rockwork, do you? I shall have to see to that. It's not the right time of year to buy rockwork."

I say, sarcastically, "It may grow, though, perhaps; there's no knowing."

He doesn't notice the sarcasm. He says, "Do you mean stonecrop?" but I don't think it worth while to pursue the subject.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two days have elapsed. The landscape gardener has not been near since. He is either offended, or can't find any rockwork.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is the third day, and here he is again—at half-past four this time.

I like a man to begin his day early, even if he does wake up all the rest of the world doing so.

He has brought a plant to take the place of the laurel, which he is going to let me have cheap, and the rockwork is to follow. It does follow shortly after-



*The Rockwork.*

wards, and the landscape gardener and two of his mates, aided by me and Clarissa, carry it through the passage into the garden, where it is piled up carefully in one place, previous to its being removed to another, until a third is got ready for it.

Then the landscaper and his mates go away for hours, and I pass the time in a feverish way, looking down at the rocks and up the road to see whether any of them are coming back.

It is the afternoon of another day, and the landscape gardener has returned, the worse for liquor. He also looks down at the rocks—as it seems to me, contemptuously. He says they are not the right sort, and no up to much. He also says it is the act of an ass to try on such a thing in such a limited space. He says give him four acres and he is all there. He adds that you couldn't fight the Battle of Waterloo on the boiler-lid.

He has gone away again (for more beer, I think), and left the plan open on the rocks. It has come on to rain, and the plan is getting wet through.

I go forth to fetch it in, and find a corner torn off, to light a pipe with, as is proved by the half-charred remains screwed up and thrown aside.

This is scarcely respectful.

And here comes the landscaper back again. I will speak my mind to him on the subject. I have. He has laughed.



The Act of Defiance.

I have asked him how he dared. He is sitting on the rocks. He is very drunk. He is asking me to come on, if I am man enough.

Shall I do it? I (Major Penny) who on the Enslanguined Field——

No, 't is beneath me. And even Mrs. Penny allows that she has no doubt that——

---

## CHAPTER XV

### SHE ASKS QUESTIONS.

CLARISSA says the boiler won't act, and she thinks it's because there is something wrong with the ballcock in the cistern.

Mrs. Penny, who is reading the Police part of the newspaper, lays it down, and asks if I feel myself equal to the occasion.

I must confess that there are times when I really do not feel quite certain how to take Mrs. Penny's observations, which—as, for instance, on the present occasion, if I did not know for a fact that there were not the slightest grounds for such a supposition—I should be half inclined to fancy reflected on my management of, say, such matters as the kitchen boiler and the internal organization of the cistern that supplies it.

Laying down my half of the newspaper (the Eastern Question and leaders), I say quietly, "I will first endeavour to ascertain what is the matter."

Mrs. Penny says, "Won't you take off your dressing-gown? and perhaps if you were to put on one of Clarissa's aprons?"

I ignore the second suggestion, and descending to the front kitchen, request Clarissa to oblige me with a lighted candle, and, holding it in one hand, lead the way to the scullery where the cistern is, Mrs. Penny humming to herself, though seemingly unconscious that there is anything *àpropos* in it, "See the Conquering Hero comes."

The first question that occurs to me on contemplating the cistern from the spot where I am now standing is, How am I to get up to it?

We do not happen to have such a thing as a step-ladder in our possession, but if I can get upon the sink it is possible I may be able to look over the top. It is, however, difficult to calculate from the spot where I am now standing. Now for the sink.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is a very difficult thing to calculate heights by the eye, and that sink was rather higher than I had expected when I raised my right foot. However, I have done it somehow. Although still considerably short of the top of the cistern, I am, as it were, upon the way.

Mrs. Penny says, "Pray don't over-exert yourself."

An idea occurs to me. There are two pails in a corner of the kitchen. These combined, that is to say,

one placed on the top of the other, will tend to lessen the distance. I will try.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have. It's awfully tottery, and requires much of the skill of a Blondin to grapple with successfully.

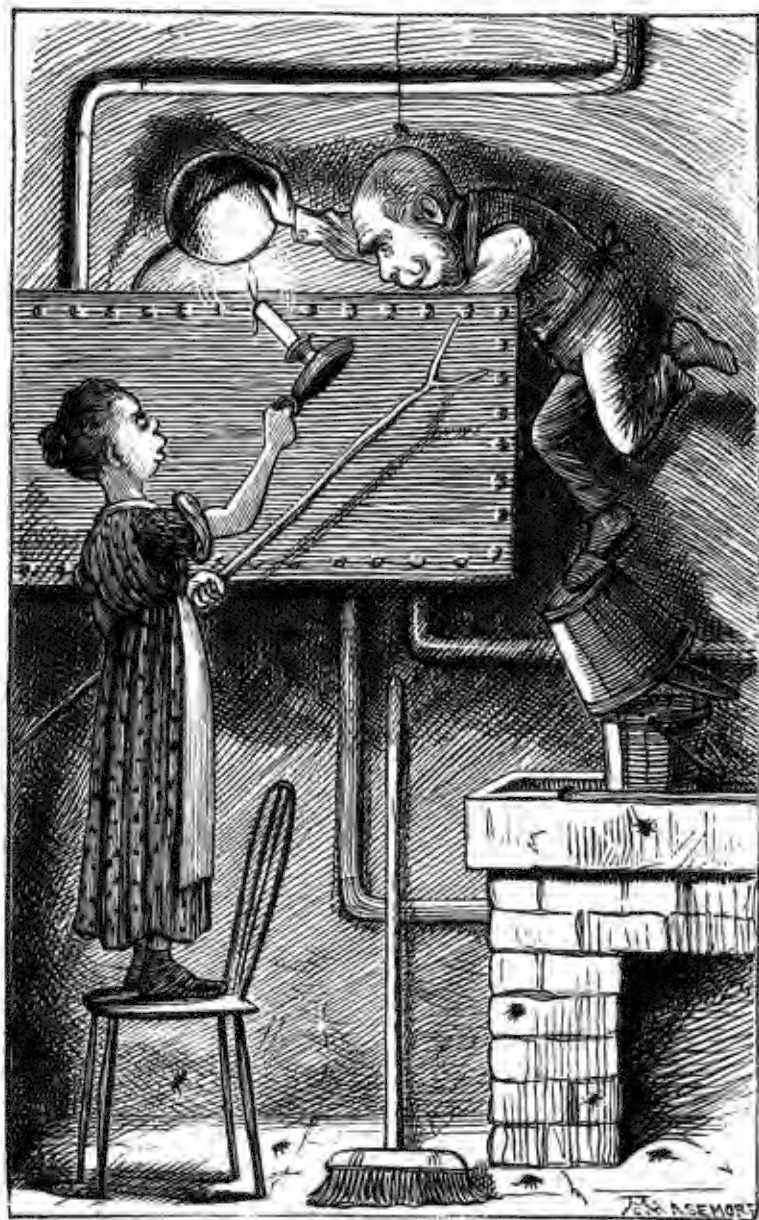
Mrs. Penny says, "Don't tumble down."

I am at the present moment, with the aid of the lighted candle, making a careful inspection of the interior of the cistern, and I am willing to admit that, as far it has gone (I have been at it about ten minutes), the results of my inspection are scarcely satisfactory. In all probability had I earlier in life directed my attention to the matter, I might have known more, by the mere external appearance of the machinery, as to whether it was in working order; but as it is I am willing to allow (to myself) that there may be something wrong, and in all probability there is, but I'll be hanged if I can see what.

Mrs. Penny says, "Do you think you ought to call in a general practitioner in the usual way, and ask him to bring some tools and things?"

I don't like saying anything rude to Mrs. Penny, particularly before the girl, but I think it absolutely necessary that I should, at least, gently intimate that if she went back upstairs and left me alone, I could get on better. On this Mrs. Penny departs blithely, and is presently heard playing "Rule Britannia" on the piano in the front parlour.

Left to myself, I feel that my reputation is, to a certain extent, at stake, and that I *must* do something, whatever the result may be.



The Major showing the way it is done.



Under these circumstances I seize upon the un-offending ball-cock and wrench it violently. At the same moment the pails give way, and though, happily, able to break my fall somewhat by clutching at a leaden pipe, I assume a sitting posture in the middle of the wet sink.

The deafening clatter of the pails and the piercing shriek of Clarissa, who, at the same time, falls off a chair and drops the tin candlestick, bring Mrs. Penny, breathless, upon the scene, to know whether I have broken any bones.

Although I have bumped myself rather severely, this appears to me hardly the proper moment to say so, and I reply loftily that no bones are broken. On which Mrs. Penny, who appears determined to know, says, "Turn round and let me see."

\* \* \* \* \*

Next morning! I awake with sensations similar to those which, I presume, are felt by a wrestler who has had several heavy falls on the previous day. It is very early, but some one is hammering at my bed-room door. It is Clarissa. She says, "Please, sir, do come down, the kitching's full o' water, an' your boots is sunk, an' I can't fish 'em up agin."

\* \* \* \* \*

It is no good alarming Mrs. Penny. I descend hastily in scanty attire, and fall to with a pail baling. Clarissa bales also. Meanwhile the flood rises.

After an hour or so we hear footsteps on the stairs, and Mrs. Penny appears, and very placidly inquires what we are doing?

This is really childish of Mrs. Penny. I myself don't condescend to reply, but Clarissa says, "We're busy, mum, ain't us?" and pausing a moment to glance towards where I am standing knee-deep in water, presenting only a back view, from their point of observation, she bursts out laughing, and adds, "Look at master, mum! Don't he look funny?"

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HE IS VIOLENT.

MIGHTY are the changes that have been wrought within the last half-century among what were once green lanes and flowery meads in the peaceful suburbs of this great metropolis! Battle of Bosworth Field Road was in my childhood's days a pleasant green, and the site of my residence, Plantagenet Villa, a pond that frogs were fond of.

This circumstance (the existence of the pond, I mean, not the fondness for it in the frogs) may in some measure account for the dampness of our cellar, and the way the small coal hisses when put upon the parlour fire.

I may, perhaps, here be permitted to add that I

only recently recollected the pond, or I might not have taken this house for three years certain.

A portion of the pleasant green—about four square yards of it—still lingers, and, though not as green as could be desired, is yet withal something to look out upon from the front windows.

An ancient man, who daily takes a walk up Bosworth Field Road, and is good enough to use the garden wall in front of Plantagenet Villa to rest himself on, has told me I would hardly know that green as it was, to see it now. He says, "It were a hazyish place, it lay so low. I mind the time there was low fever here mostly al'ays."

This is brisk, when I've got the house for three years, as I previously stated. It's good of him to tell me, though (and he has done so every other day in almost exactly the same words), because it's a useful thing to know, and he means well, I'm sure.

Yet, though he does mean well, I wish he would give somebody else's garden wall a turn, by way of a change, and if he must sit on my garden wall, I wish to goodness he wouldn't encourage that confounded Gander.

The confounded Gander I refer to is the Gander of Gander Green also referred to at some length in the parish archives.

It would appear that the four square yards are all that remain of the Gander Green in question, and the Gander aforesaid is the last of his race, and is supported in a sort of way (when anybody recollects it) by the parish, in pursuance of certain instructions left by an old lady deceased some time ago, who bequeathed



The Gander.

a sum of money to the parish, with the stipulation that her flock of geese should be taken care of and fed regularly, and allowed to die of old age.

The Gander at that time was but a gosling, and he is now considerably past his prime. A series of fatalities have deprived him of his wives and the Green he loved them on, and he goes about a sad and sorrowful Gander, looking for both in the front gardens of the villas of Battle of Bosworth Field Road, when you leave your gates open, and nibbles, in an absent-minded way, at your pansies and your London pride.

I confess I have not, hitherto, thought it worth my while to direct my attention to the feeding of geese or ganders, and, possibly, London pride and pansies may be their proper diet ; but I wish it to be distinctly understood those flowers were not planted in my front garden for that purpose. Futhermore, I desire it to be known that even though this Gander, which being a privileged Gander, may have a kind of *droit du Seig-*



"Go away, sir, immediately."

neur over my London pride and pansies, I don't see what right he has to steal a carrot from a garden opposite, and bring the stolen property into my garden to eat, and, what's more, I won't stand it.

At this present moment he is immovable in the centre path of my front garden with the carrot in question, and is treating my indignant remonstrances with contempt.

Naturally incensed, I sally forth and open the garden gate to its full width, previous to resorting to desperate measures. In the meanwhile the Gander walks quietly through the side door into the back garden.

I follow him, and cry "S—shoo!" but he is still indifferent. I advance and charge him, on which he hisses, and there is an evil look in his eye. Upon this for a moment I lose my self-command, and, grasping a lump of rock, hurl it, vengefully, at his head.



Rage and fury.

Good heavens!

This is an awful business! My first instinct was to glance towards the neighbours' windows. For a wonder they are not, as usual, full of heads. No one seems to be looking—no one has been a witness of the deed!

What is to be done? It will require consideration; but the first thing, evidently, is to conceal the body among the rockwork.

It is concealed, and now for a walk. I would be by myself, and collect my thoughts.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have been for the walk, and return to dinner in a feverish condition, with my plans still immature. I have been reflecting about the business, and I am inclined to think that something very unpleasant—something very serious may come of it. It is not as though the Gander were ordinary private property. There will doubtless be an inquiry—a coroner's inquest for what I know, and I shall have to explain.



Remorse.

What's that?

I am upon the threshold of my house, and my hand is on the knocker, when a strange perfume assails my nostrils. There is no mistaking that smell. It is roast goose! What madness of Mrs. Penny to do this! The whole parish will now know the truth!

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THEY WANT HIM.

I MUST confess that there are moments—yes, there really *are* moments—when, in a figurative sense, I scarcely follow Mrs. Penny. The present moment is one of them.

Naturally, with a murdered goose upon my con-

science, and, for what I know, a hue and cry all over the country-side, extreme caution is absolutely necessary. No sooner, therefore, do I get the street door open than I rush into the parlour and exclaim, "Good heavens! Mrs. Penny, how could you perpetrate such an insane act of folly?" Happening just then to drop my eye upon Clarissa, who, open-mouthed, fills up the background, I add, suddenly, "Chut!"

Mrs. Penny says, "What ever is the matter?"

Once more I add, "Chut!" with even more significance. "What's 'Chut'?" asks Mrs. Penny. I say in a whisper, which I own might be audible some distance off, such as out in the back yard, for instance: "That girl—that wretched girl—Clarissa!"

Mrs. Penny, out loud (out loud, if you please!) asks in reply, "What has she done?"

"Chut!" I cry again, "chut! Listening! Don't you understand?"

Here Clarissa breaks in with, "I'm sure I wasn't. I'd scorn the action. What's master always want to be settin' on to me for? I wish he'd leave me alone."

All this is getting so confoundedly absurd, I think it best to throw the whole thing up and laugh; but Mrs. Penny does not join, and Clarissa leaves the room with an intensely hurt expression, wiping her eyes with the back of her hand. As soon as we are alone Mrs. Penny says, "My dear, are you not well? What an excited state you do get into sometimes! Don't you think you stop indoors too much, and over-exert yourself on the management of the domestic affairs?"

"Mrs. Penny," I say, as calmly as I can, "how came you to interfere with that goose?"



She says, "Did *you* want to cook it?"

"Certainly not!" I reply, with warmth. "What does Clarissa know about it?"

"Nothing whatever," replies Mrs. Penny. "She wasn't even going to empty it."

"Pshaw!" I exclaim, almost driven to frenzy, "where are the feathers?"

"Good gracious!" says Mrs. Penny, "I don't know, but I suppose the man has them."

"The man!" I shriek. "There's a man in it, is there? What man?"

"The poulterer, of course."

"Poulterer! What poulterer?"

"Where we bought the goose."

"The gander—or the goose as you call him, that is at this moment cooking downstairs at the kitchen fire?"

"Yes, certainly!"

What an extraordinary coincidence!

I hope I have not gone on in any way which might be looked upon as at all bordering on the ridiculous. Under the circumstances, however, perhaps, as nothing is known of *my* Gander, I had better not go into the matter. I will pass it off lightly.

I have passed it off lightly, to the best of my ability, and we have dinner; but I fancy Mrs. Penny eyes me strangely from time to time, and is even more than usually silent.

"By the bye, dear, I forgot to tell you," she says, suddenly, "there was a Mr. Jawkins called when you were out, and said he desired to see you upon some parochial business."

I involuntarily start. Luckily she does not notice.

"It was to solicit your aid," she continues, "upon what he termed a subject of some importance. A new omnibus is projected to run from the Halfway House to the Worldsend, a want for which, he assured me, had been long felt in the neighbourhood; and he had ventured, at the suggestion of his fellow-townsmen, to solicit you to take up a prominent position on the Committee of Local Management, if you would so far honour them by the weight of your name and influence."

It must be owned that this Mr.—a—Jawkins has not altogether left his business in the worst hands, and that Mrs. Penny has really, upon occasions, a manner of expressing herself which, in a female, is highly creditable. With regard to my fitness for the post in question, modesty compels me to refrain from comment. I may, ere now (upon the Ensanguined Field) have been put to the test, and not found wanting; but this is not for me to say. Upon the face of it, however, it would, at least, seem probable that he who had successfully moved bodies of artillery might be capable of tooling along two 'bus 'osses and a 'bus.

I put this notion, which is allegorical, of course, as respects the tooling, and Mrs. Penny says, "They don't want you to drive, dear. They'll have regular men both in front and behind. I asked them that when they spoke of your conducting."

Mrs. Penny is, as I may have said before, a most extraordinary mixture of *naïveté* and intelligence.

"I must take the matter into consideration," I say, after a pause. "It is a question whether I can spare the time."



The Major becomes a Local Celebrity.

"He asked for your Christian name," says Mrs. Penny, "and wanted to know whether you were a Major of Volunteers."

Next morning, it would appear, Mr. Jawkins is expected to call again.

Next morning has arrived, and with it Jawkins. Mrs. Penny has introduced me, and after certain necessary inquiries, I have given my consent. This evening is the first meeting, and I am voted to the Chair.

---

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HE GOES FORTH.

THIS point settled, the question naturally arises, What next?



Contemplation.

These reflections occur to me as I stand gazing at my name, in large type, upon a yellow bill, displayed in the window of a local outfitter.

Whilst I am yet absorbed in the contemplation, the outfitter comes out and asks if he can do anything for me.



*Solicitation.*

"No," I reply, waving him off; "I was merely reading this announcement."

"Got a nice overcoat inside," he continues: "give you a good price for that old worn-out 'un you've got on."

\* \* \* \* \*

It would appear that it is one of the duties of a Committee to meet together and have dinner, each member defraying his own expenses, except in the case of the Chair, who, it appears, is expected to stand something extra. The dinner takes place at the tavern the 'bus starts from.

Besides the dinner there is other business, of course.

There are, for instance, the resolutions which have to be carried—(Mrs. Penny later on asks "Where to?")—and there is an amendment proposed by Jawkins and opposed by Dawkins, and a vote of thanks for the Chair, to which I am responding when some one announces that the haunch of mutton is on the table. Whilst I briefly apologize for not being able to reply at greater length, the Committee go away one at a time, and choose their places at the table. When I join them there are cheers.

It is really a very excellent haunch, and is done ample justice to by all concerned. I carve.

The cloth removed, the toasts proposed are—"The Queen, and the rest of the Royal Family;" "Her Majesty's Ministers;" "The Army, the Navy, and Auxiliary Forces;" and "The Success of the New Omnibus." To this is added, "The health of the Proprietor of the New Omnibus," "The health of the Builder," and some one adds "The health of the Drivers and Conductors." Our host is also proposed; and then some one says,—*"Though last, not least; here's our worthy Chair, the Major!"*

As I rise to reply, some one says, "The 'bus is at the door. Come on. Let's start."

There is some little delay before I can get my bill properly adjusted—two bottles of port, belonging to two other gentlemen, having somehow found their way into it, owing to an error on the part of the waiter—and there is a still further delay in finding my hat, which has got covered over inadvertently; and when I get down to the tavern door, from which the 'bus is to start, I find it has already started.

My first instinct is to let the 'bus go, and treat it with contempt, but the idea occurs to me that this, in the Chairman, is scarcely the course to pursue. Meanwhile two men are cheering vociferously, and a small boy more vociferously still. Just as the 'bus is turning the corner I seize on the small boy, and bid him run after it, and call "Stop!"

The small boy says, "Why? It's full."

I struggle hard to make him understand, and then seeing that the case is desperate, start running myself. At the same time some one else, somehow, manages to reach the small boy's mental stronghold, and the



Determination.

result is that the small boy is now running ahead of me, shouting "Stop!" with all the power of his young lungs.

On this an elderly female spectator adds her voice, and waves her umbrella.

Meanwhile the 'bus pursues its allotted course, and I follow after, but I don't shout, because I have no breath left.



Desperation.

At last the conductor and somebody on the knifeboard of the 'bus realizes what has happened, and induce the driver to stop. A moment afterwards, and every one else on the knifeboard on either side seems to have realized also, and is shouting "Stop!" too.

It seems to be only the driver now who does not realize. And now he does, and it is only the horses who can't be got to understand, and won't be pulled up.

Explanations have been made, and somebody who has a pocket-pistol, containing some really remarkably fine cognac, has passed it to me. Matters, I may say, are at the present moment on a more satisfactory footing, and all is going merrily with one exception—the 'bus.

The 'bus itself, however, has come to a sudden standstill, owing to something wrong with the off wheel.



The off wheel is not, as yet, quite off, but it waggles alarmingly, and we have come to a full stop whilst it is looked at. The populace meanwhile cheering, from time to time.

Those in the inside have got out, and those on the roof got down. We are now all looking at the wheel waggle, at the instigation of the conductor, who says "it is as loose as water."

Somebody suggest as "gin and water," and some one else says "Halfway House."

A trusty messenger meanwhile has been dispatched in search of a wheelwright, but he throws a deal of time into the conveyance of his message, and as we have by this time come back from the Halfway House, some one else suggests a bit of string, and one, who is the wag of the party, produces a second-hand postage stamp, which he affixes to the wheel with much solemnity, and then calls on us to resume our places.

\* \* \* \* \*

We *are* off now. A man with a hammer has done something to the waggling wheel, and it waggles no longer. We depart with three cheers, and reach our journey's end without further adventure. Glasses round ensue, and then each, having lighted a cigar, sallies forth to resume his place.

Then there is a little unpleasantness. Some of the general public, under the impression that the 'bus is for their accommodation, have made themselves comfortable inside and out.

There is a washerwoman inside, and a basket of clothes on the roof. There are also six navvies, all

very drunk, on the knifeboard, who won't move when told to do so.

"Major," says some one, "you who are, as it were, at home upon the Ensanguined Field, now's your time!"

---

## CHAPTER XIX.

### HE COMES BACK.

THE midnight hour has chimed. The stars are dotted o'er the deep blue canopy of heaven. The silvery moon is shedding its gentle lustre upon the Battle of Bosworth Field Road, and I (Major Penny), seated upon a stone in front of my own semi-detached villa residence, am regarding the same with feelings in my breast wherein sorrow gets the upper hand of anger, to give place in its turn to almost bitter irony as it finds vent in words:—

"What," I say, as I stretch forth my hand in the direction of the dwelling above alluded to, "what have I to do with this? Is it worthy of me? No!"

Then I laugh a hollow, mirthless laugh that is bad to hear, and snap my fingers at the habitation aforesaid.

"What," I continue, in a tone of withering scorn, "what indeed?"

No! 't is useless striving to disguise the fact any longer. I have this evening arrived at the conclusion, and reluctantly has that conclusion been arrived at,

that a more extended sphere of action is necessary for the development of faculties nurtured by the cannon's roar upon the Ensanguined Field!

I will not say that the management even of such a household as that which consists of myself, Mrs. Penny, and the girl Clarissa, does not at times call forth, on a minor scale, qualities similar to those exercised upon the Field in question, while the cannons were on the roar——

"Yet, still, Major Penny, sir," I cannot resist from exclaiming, "yet, still, is this all that we have expected of you, whose early years of promise were the talk of—were, in fact, very frequently mentioned by your own mother? No, once more, and still more emphatically, No!"

It may possibly have been observed by those who have taken the heads of festive boards, and regulated the pushing round of the flowing bowl, that episodes of unwonted eloquence happen later on—too late, rather, for them to be of any use. At the present moment Cicero (if I may be pardoned a cant phrase of the day) would hardly "be in it" with the hero of this narrative.

"Major Penny, sir," I naturally exclaim, "now or never is the time to rise, and, if possible, Major Penny, sir, be equal to the hic—I mean oc—only it wasn't 'ock, it was B and S—and B and S is foolish when over-done. Yet this is trifling! A truce to ribaldry, Where's the latch-key?"

\* \* \* \* \*

It is really most extraordinary, when you come to

think of it, that the fact that I hitherto have not been in the habit of carrying a latch-key has actually slipped my memory, and I am only recalled to a full sense of the situation by Clarissa, the girl, jerking the street door open whilst I am making sure, with one hand, where the keyhole is. Fortunately, I am searching on the opposite side of the door to that on which the keyhole exists, so I don't go in with much of a run when the door opens.

Clarissa observes, "Missus was very tired, sir, and she's gone to bed; and would you like any supper, sir, she says?"

It may not have struck everybody, yet still it may, possibly, be allowed by some, that when the vocalist is suddenly called upon by the musician for his upper G, he, as a rule, has it handy. Called upon now for a simple monosyllable, with a choice between the negative and the affirmative, it, oddly enough, seems to me to require a moment or two to decide which monosyllable is the safest to venture on. Meanwhile Clarissa adds, "Or would you like any more to drink, sir?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Anthick—more—dring?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank goodness, Clarissa has retired—hastily, as it seemed to me, and I am sitting on a kind of bench arrangement in the hall, with my hat on my head, my right boot and umbrella in my right hand, and the candlestick in the left, wondering what on earth I am to do to get off my left boot with my hands so full.

\* \* \* \* \*



The Return of the Reveller.

I am upstairs in the dressing-room. So are my boots, my hat, and my umbrella, and the candle and candlestick (the extinguisher fell somewhere and would not be found).

Apparently Mrs. Penny is asleep. Let us be cautious!

How strange all this is, though, when you come to consider! There was a time when the cannon roared and the Ensanguined Field—I forget exactly what the Ensanguined Field did, but it was awfully Ensanguined—and look at me at this moment!

I can scarcely realize those days of carnage, those days when death was nothing and glory everything, and you called for another horse when the one was shot down under you (if you happened to be mounted at the time), and rushed headlong on the foe in the heat of their retreat, and cut down the first exhausted straggler you came up with.

Yonder, in that corner cupboard, where the dirty clothes are kept, is the faithful sword that ere now has kept by my side, never leaving it for a moment, through periods of the intensest suspense, when the enemy were close at your back, and you had nothing but your heels to look to. Why shouldn't I?

\* \* \* \* \*

I have! My trusty blade is buckled on. The tunic of my warlike days doesn't quite fit, but as far as the head goes my shako is all there, and now for the sword exercise! Do I remember it? Let me see!

Crash!

I had no notion the trusty blade could have been

sharp enough to cut a water-jug in two, and now here is Mrs. Penny, who says she fancied she heard something break, and wants to know if I am dressing for a fancy ball.

"Whatshemeansh?"

---

## CHAPTER XX.

### SHE HOUNDS HIM DOWN.

I PRESUME that there are moments in the lives of most of us, upon the Ensanguined Field and elsewhere, when one does not feel altogether heroic. Such a moment is this, and I, Major Penny, sitting now *vis-à-vis* with my breakfast bacon, am hardly equal to the occasion.

Meanwhile Mrs. Penny is, if I may be permitted the expression, preternaturally sprightly. Mrs. Penny has been up hours, playing inspiriting music for a considerable length of time upon the drawing-room piano. Also she has carolled blithely upon the staircase, and she is humming now. She has breakfasted some time ago, and my breakfast has been kept warm. It consists of hot tea, dry toast, and bacon, which swims in its fat.

I don't feel lively, as I have previously observed. On the contrary, I feel deadly sick, and the aspect of this ghastly bacon fills me with unutterable loathing. If Mrs. Penny had not got her eye on me, which she

has, I would hurl this bacon into space through the open window.

As it is, however, I can but resort to subterfuge. I, therefore, toy with the tea-cup and dally with the rasher, and endeavour to tire Mrs. Penny out. But she won't be tired out. She tells me I have let my tea get cold, and wants to fill up the cup with scalding liquid and have my bacon warmed again.

I have grave doubts as to the probable result of drinking a cup of hot tea, and shudder when I think of the certain consequences attendant on a mouthful of bacon. If ever again I take the Chair, or have anything more to do with any confounded omnibuses, I'm a Dutchman.

"There's such a capital leader here in the *Times* about habitual drunkards," says Mrs. Penny, who is reading the paper.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank goodness, I am at length alone, and not a moment is to be lost. This bacon must be made a parcel of, and this tea emptied into the coal-scuttle.

So much for the tea, as long as it does not run out through a crevice anywhere; and now for the bacon! Where is there a piece of paper to wrap it up in before I throw it out of window?

\* \* \* \* \*

She has returned before I have opened the window. I have concealed the bacon on my body, and am dissembling like anything behind the day-before-yesterday's *Standard*, upside down.

\* \* \* \* \*



Time has elapsed. I casually observe some moisture on the brown holland floor cover, in the immediate neighbourhood of the coal-scuttle, and the grease is beginning to come through the paper round the bacon. I must put the bacon in a place of safety, somewhere, for the present. Suppose I put it behind the looking-glass.



*The Discovery.*

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a knock at the door. One of the people belonging to that confounded Omnibus Committee. I'll say I'm out. No, it is too late. Clarissa has bounded upstairs like a greyhound and let him in. He nods to Mrs. Penny with hideous familiarity, and digs me in the ribs with a familiarity which is more hideous still.

He says, "It was wettish last night, wasn't it, Major?"  
Mrs. Penny stares.

He adds, "Mops and broomy I call it. Seen some

of 'em this morning. They've got heads on to 'em, too, make no mistake. Well, I can't stand it myself, you know. Ain't *you* rather bad?"

I don't exactly know how I do it, but I get him out of the room somehow, and presently get him out of the house, and then, unable to bear up any longer, I pretend I'm busy, and take a fitful sleep in my *sanctum sanctorum*, with my head in my hands.

But the respite is a short one. Mrs. Penny has a nice hot lunch of pork sausages and mashed potatoes prepared for me. The only thing for me to do, as far as I can see, is to go a long walk beyond the boundary of the suburb, and lie down in a lonely field.

Meanwhile Mrs. Penny, who is setting the room to-rights, alights suddenly upon that wretched bacon. "Major," she cries, "will you look at this?"



The Denunciation.

I turn another shade of green, and ask, "What is it?"

She says, "Clarissa makes parcels of the food to take home to her mother."

I exclaim, "Impossible! You must be mistaken."

She says, "Who else could have put it here? I will ring the bell and tax her with it at once."

Poor, miserable girl, this cannot be; and yet, how can I own that it was I—I, Major P——

At this moment Clarissa herself enters the room.

"If you please, mum, the paper-boy says his missus says as some one's been tearin' bits out of the *Times*, and you must keep it, please, because it's no good to her now, and she can't send it out to nobody else to read."

Deuce take it all! in my agitation I must have torn the *Times*, which I have on the hourly hire system, instead of the *Standard*, which I buy.

"All right," I say, eager to get rid of her anyhow out of the room; "I will pay for it, of course."

"See," cries Mrs. Penny, who still clings to the hideous packet of bacon, "this is the identical piece that was torn out. Is it possible——"

Upon my word Mrs. Penny really has at times a way of hounding one down, as it were, that there ought to be a limit to, and on the present occasion I feel it my duty to request her as a personal favour to allow the matter to drop.

"Why, I do believe," she says, when Clarissa has left the room, "that you've been playing at hiding the bacon all by yourself. Well, that was funny of you, Major!"

\* \* \* \* \*

I am not able to make a suitable reply to this re-



Something wrong again.

mark, which at the best must be allowed to be somewhat ill-placed and unseemly, before Clarissa has once more burst upon the scene, this time with a distraught air and breathless. "Oh, if you please, mum," she cries, "I do wish master would come and see what it is that's buried in the back garden. I am afraid to. I think it's a body."

Horrible thought! That Gander! I had quite forgotten him.

---

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THEY RATTLE HIM UP.

MRS. PENNY won't leave that 'bus business alone. She says, "You seem to me so eminently suited for it!"

"For what?" I ask. I don't know how it is, but I so frequently have to request Mrs. Penny to make her meaning plainer.

"For the performance of the duties connected with the management of affairs of that kind," she replies. "By-the-by, didn't you tell me there was a button off the neck of one of your shirts?"

"All of them, I think," I reply, with withering sarcasm.

"I wonder whether I've got buttons enough," she says, with intense seriousness (I don't believe she has the faintest perception of satire). "But if not, Clarissa could run out. No; she's busy—but you, perhaps?"

I take no notice. 'T is true, I smile—a bitter smile, but I don't feel equal to a wordy contest. I simply subside behind my *Standard*, still two days old, and upside down, as before, and ask myself whether I (Major Penny), who have trodden the Ensanguined Field (as I may possibly elsewhere have mentioned), should be expected to pass the autumn of his life fetching and carrying ignoble pennyworths of shirt buttons?

\* \* \* \* \*

Rap! tap! tap! tap! tap! tap!

Has it ever occurred to any one that, in the suburbs of London, there is a habit or custom which prevails among the lower classes of assaulting your knocker, when you have one, with unnecessary violence? For instance, an emissary from the local shoemaker, the other day, who set up my heels, came with six separate and distinct bangs (I counted them), and the local hatter's assistant who ironed my hat played a perfect

fantasia on my knocker, with a visitors' bell accompaniment.

As I lay down my *Standard* (right side up this time), I rise with the full determination of wreaking vengeance on the rap-tappist, at this moment bombarding my premises, and who, I have reason to believe, is an itinerant vendor of groundsel, who has been already told, ten times, to my knowledge, that we don't keep a bird.

I am, however, mistaken: it is not the young gentleman alluded to, but a local authority, whom I remember at the omnibus place, and a stranger of semi-military aspect, who wears a check cut-away shooting coat and a billycock hat.

Although it is not Groundsel, I must confess I do not feel too delighted, and, with but scant courtesy, bid them enter. Boodle (the local authority's name is Boodle) says, "I have called upon rather unpleasant business, Major Penny, concerning which, as a future member of our Local Board, I feel it my duty to consult you, and to invite your support and assistance."

I begin observing that, "Really, not having very much time on my hands"—but he interrupts me.

"It is a question of more moment, Major, than might at first appear. There are institutions, bulwarks, landmarks, if I may be allowed the expression, that must be closely guarded and held intact, or where are we?"

I say, "Certainly, that's the question."

"Yes," repeats Boodle, "that *is* the question. What *has* become of the Gander?"


I am luckily seated at the time, or most probably I



Pail, the Detective.

should lose my balance as he says this, and I can only sit, open-mouthed, gasping. Boodle continues: "As a recent and, I trust I may add, distinguished addition to our body, Major, you perhaps may not yet have become cognizant of all the details relating to our Gander; but you must have noticed him upon the green in front of your house. Major, he has disappeared! Possibly by fair means, but, more probably, by foul; and this is not all. With that Gander, owing to certain provisions in the will of his former proprietor, goes with him a certain yearly sum paid by his former proprietor's executors to the guardians of this parish. I will not say that the sum is large; but as one of the Board, is it not my duty to jealously guard a penny as much as a pound? And, Major, I think you will be gratified to learn that we have, so to speak, spotted the delinquent. We know, although we may not be able to prove it all at once, who has killed our Gander. This gentleman is Mr. Pail, the famous detective officer, and it will be his duty to bring the crime home to the culprit."

I am not quite certain whether I am on my head or my heels. Boodle is gone, but Mr. Pail, the detective, remains behind. I am rather surprised to find that it is not I whom they suspect, but the wretched man who occupies the other half of my semi-detached residence; and for some reason I cannot as yet quite fathom, he is sitting on the rockwork, *under which the Gander is buried*, fixing the other half with an unflinching eye. For what I know to the contrary, this may go on for weeks.





## CHAPTER XXII.

## SHE REFLECTS.

I AM at the present moment on the very point of asking myself whether I (Major Penny) who upon the *Ensanguined*—

But here exhausted nature is incapable of further pursuing the subject. What have I now to do with *Ensanguined Fields*? True, I may in times long gone have won honour, distinction, nay, military rank even (by purchase); but of what avail has all this been? Observe me, here, at this moment. I—Major—but you know me by this time, or ought to do so, confound you! Excuse me if this expression is uncourteous, but I really do not feel at all myself to-day.

I have just returned from the City. In consequence of what I read this morning in the *City* article, I went into the City rather hastily. According to the *City* article, the way I have invested that money I got away from the fellow who ruined Mrs. Penny's father, is likely to turn out rather unsatisfactory. Mrs. Penny is not aware of the nature of the investment I have made. At the time I did not think it necessary to inform her, and I feel at the present moment, after the awful fall there has been, somewhat indisposed to give her any information.

My man of business, who has the matter now in hand, says, "Why didn't you come to me sooner, and I might have done something?" As matters now stand, my man of business doesn't exactly say he can

do nothing at all, because if he did I don't clearly see what on earth is going to become of me; but the hopes he hangs out for the future are of the dimmest.

As, wayworn and weary, I approach the semi-detached residence in the Battle of Bosworth Field Road, taken when all was bright and hopeful—ah! how long ago it seems now!—the tear-drop rises to my eye, and I groan aloud.

A ribald child, passing me at the moment, calls to his nurse to "look at that old gentleman making funny faces."

As I mount the steps there is little left of the elasticity that was wont to be a leading characteristic of that martial stride which upon the—Bother!

'T is indeed bitter, when the time comes that all one's past seems worthless to look back upon; so much energy expended without results—so much time lost!

As I enter I ask Clarissa listlessly if dinner is nearly ready. She says, "The butcher has sent nothing. Did you forget to order it, sir?" It is true I did forget to order it. "But," I exclaim, "is there no one else in the house capable of seeing to things during my absence?" Clarissa says, "You always arranges everything yourself, sir. We didn't like to interfere." "Go and get some chops," I reply, gloomily, as I enter my study and close the door.

A moment afterwards Clarissa taps. "Please, sir, missus and me can't make the washing right. Have you got the book? And please, sir, the policeman in the back garden wants to speak to you."

I can't find the washing-book, but I go out to the policeman. He is still fooling about over that precious

Gander business, and still sits perched like a pelican on the top of the rockwork, looking out afar.

On seeing him I can scarcely refrain from a smile, but I suppose there will be a deuce of a row when the body is at length discovered, if it ever is. My only comfort is that the detective is planted directly over the spot where the body of the victim lies buried ; so the secret is, for the present, comparatively safe.

He is a man of few words, is Mr. Pail, the detective, but what little he does say he ekes out, as it were, by winks, which appear to be of enormous significance as long as you've got the key ; without that, there's perhaps a little vagueness about them.

I ask him if he is any nearer the Gander than he was, and he says (with a wink) he is not many miles off. I say, "How long do you think it will take?" and he says, "We mustn't be hasty." He is paid by the day, and evidently means to make a longish job of it. Meanwhile my mind is occupied by other matters, and I wish to goodness I could sit down quietly somewhere and think. Meanwhile, also, where the deuce is my left slipper?

It is a most extraordinary thing, but there seems to be some evil genius in this house, for ever mixing things up and putting them away in places where they can't be found again. I mention this to Clarissa. I say, "When I was the head of a former establishment, and had the entire charge of a household consisting of my three sisters and the domestics, I never remember losing anything." Clarissa says, "I don't know how it is, sir, I'm sure. It seems to me it's one person's work picking things up after you." I say, "Clarissa,

you may go!" She replies, "There is no chops at the butcher's. The butcher says it's a pity you don't make your mind up earlier in the day." I say, "Silence! I will see to it myself."

\* \* \* \* \*

I have been to the butcher and given him a bit of my mind. I was in no humour to brook the fellow's insolence at this moment. *He* has given me a goodish bit of *his* mind also, and says he don't want my custom, and none of my "stuck-up bounciness, neither," and, if convenient, he'd like his bill settled.



*The Dawn of Doubt.*

Very well; there are other butchers, I presume. It is a good long walk to any of their shops; but I don't care about that. I have returned in triumph with a piece of beefsteak. It is true it is a straggling kind of piece to look at, somewhat resembling the map of Great Britain when spread out, and Clarissa says it will take a lot of banging, she knows, before any one

can put their teeth through it; but that is of little consequence.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have just found my left slipper locked up in a drawer of my writing-table in my study. The key of my drawer was on a bunch I had in my pocket. This is most singular.

We have worried some of the steak, and I am seated in an exhausted condition before the parlour fire, with one leg crossed over the other, deep in thought. Suddenly I observe Mrs. Peany's eye resting on my foot, and ask what is the matter. "Nothing," she says; "I was only thinking how unbecoming carpet slippers are."

\* \* \* \* \*



"Wha-a-at?"

There are moments when it is unwise to rouse the slumbering lion, and this is one of them. The lion is roused, the slippers have been hurled into space, and I am striding the length and breadth of the parlour in my newest and tightest boots. "I can't think how it is," says Mrs. Penny, "that men—particularly little men—will persist in buying things that creak so."

---

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### HE IS NOT HAPPY.

I AM not happy! I am anything but happy!

There have been words between Mrs. Penny and me, and things may have been said that may possibly be regretted; but it appeared to me at the time necessary that I should assert my authority, and my authority has been asserted.

If I have a doubt now, it is as to the efficacy of the assertion. With the ordinary run of females, according to my experience, which has extended over some years, I have no hesitation in saying that what I said would have been found to have a quelling effect; but in Mrs. Penny I do not notice this.

This confession may, looked at in some lights, possibly appear to be a humiliating one to make; but I candidly own I have been mistaken in Mrs. Penny. It would appear that I never have understood Mrs. Penny. I don't understand Mrs. Penny now, and I am half inclined to doubt whether I ever shall.

As matters stand now, I have asked Mrs. Penny whether or not I am the master of this house, and she has informed me that she has no reason to believe that I am the mistress.

Other questions of a similar character have met with replies of a nature resembling the above; but still things are far from being on a satisfactory footing, and I repeat what I said to begin with. I am not happy!

The moon is shining brightly overhead, but I heed not its brightness. If I mistake not, it shone in a similar manner upon the occasion of our honeymoon, and very likely has done the same thing for other people's honeymoons before that. As I pace to and fro in the still night, in Battle of Bosworth Field Road, the silence is only broken by that creaking of those boots to which reference has elsewhere been made; and as my thoughts revert to the fact, I involuntarily knit my brows.

I am, however, interrupted in the knitting by Clarissa, who comes to ask if I know anything of the cellar key.

I don't; I simply know that it is on the same ring with the store-room cupboard key, the key of the cheffonier and that of the linen-chest, and that I am generally supposed to carry it about with me. Strange to say, I haven't got it in my pocket.

I go indoors and search without avail. Meanwhile, Clarissa suggests trying some other keys, and brings the keys of all the rooms in the house in a bunch, and we spend twenty minutes trying them on the cellar door; after which Clarissa and I spend half an hour trying to get them back into their right keyholes

again up and downstairs. Then I fall back into my arm-chair and try and think where the deuce I put that confounded ring. Meanwhile Clarissa says—

“Hadn't I better go to the public house and get a bottle of port? Poor missus must be pretty near tired of waiting by this time!”

It seems rather preposterous to buy public house port wine when one has a dozen or so of really superior port in one's own cellar; but, unless I do so, the only way out of the difficulty would be to break open the cellar door, which would be rather preposterous too, and also slightly difficult.

However, it won't exactly do, after asking Mrs. Penny whether she did not think me competent to conduct our household arrangements, to let her know that the keys have been lost solely through my own—in point of fact, so to speak—want of care.

Presently I accidentally overhear Mrs. Penny asking Clarissa, who has gone upstairs for her bonnet what ever is the matter with the master, and whether she does not really think I require medicine or medical advice. I also overhear Clarissa saying she thinks it would do me a power of good, adding, that she herself always takes two compound rhubarbs and a black draught in the morning.

There are moments when rage and fury master one, as it were, and one kicks inoffensive objects, such as carpet slippers, into space, and this is one of them. There! There!! There!!!

And yet it does seem hard, too, on those carpet slippers. Hers! (I mean the other Hers, of course!)

And why should I? Why, indeed? A sort of kind





Something Wrong.

of pathetic remorse—overwhelming, as a whole, though somewhat vague in its attendant details—prompts me to pause and pick up the left-hand slipper, and kiss and cry over it, and wish I were dead, to the spluttering light of a solitary burner at the end of the passage; which, by the way, the gas company have written to say will be cut off if the last quarter isn't paid up the day after to-morrow.

Clarissa returns full of a mysterious import I don't quite feel equal to grapple with, and asks if I don't think I should like a nice nightcap to-night.

I naturally ask what nightcap, and why? and she says, with even an increase of import, "That's all right, sir; never mind. Take my advice. It'll do you a lot of good!"

Roughly put, no doubt, but well meaning—evidently well meaning; and why shouldn't I, after all? Indeed, occasionally—that is to say, generally—I do love what is called in the vernacular or vulgar tongue a nightcap!

\* \* \* \* \*

Good Heavens! There is a most extraordinary taste about this! Surely—but no, that is almost incredible out of a penny number or a lady's novel, published by a high-class West-end publisher! Surely she cannot—she would not——!

And yet I have been led to understand (by my favourite lady novelist) that many—indeed, I may almost say, the generality of—wives *put them away by the aid of a deadly but inscrutable poison.*

\* \* \* \* \*

After all, it was only the good medicine they tried to administer thus.

After all, they meant well, only I wish they hadn't.

## CHAPTER XXIV

## SHE IS OUT.

I AM in a deuce of a mess!

My man in the City has written to me relative to the investment of my little capital, and the result as regards the little capital (I can't help laughing in sardonic tones as I mention the fact) is that the little capital is worse than nowhere, and I shall never see a penny piece of it again.



Something more Wrong.

After mastering the contents of my business man's communication five minutes ago, I had laid it aside and was adding up the items of the unpaid and seemingly unpayable tradesmen's bills as a kind of pastime, but now I think I may as well open the rest of the letters. What's this? I ought to know the writing. To be sure. It's from Twopenny—in point of fact,

from the father of the Twins—and—come, this is not bad of Twopenny—he is complaining of my want of regularity in discharging the Twins' school bills. Here also is a letter from the schoolmaster himself, saying that if the Twins' arrears are not paid up at once, he will be reluctantly compelled to send the Twins home to me. To me, too! I like that. Why to me, I should like to know? How about Twopenny?

Hullo! This is an epistle from the Girls! What's wrong with *them*, I wonder? It is most astonishing how those Girls do always contrive to turn up at the wrong moment with some preposterous sense of injury, and now I suppose——

No,—I say, this is *too* bad!

"We have heard all," they say, "and shall be with our poor, dear, unfortunate, imprudent brother almost as soon as this letter reaches him."

I should like to escape somewhere, if it would not be an unmanly act to desert Mrs. Penny. But perhaps it would. By the way, though, where is Mrs. Penny? I have neither seen nor heard anything of her all the morning. "Clarissa!"

Clarissa, questioned on the subject, says that Mrs. Penny received a telegram about two hours ago, and put on her bonnet immediately, and left the house in a great hurry, without saying a word. What is the name of all that is mysterious?——

By Jove! here is the telegram, and it is a clincher. Mrs. Penny's long-lost father, generally supposed to have gone down in the *Bella* with the Claimant and Kenealy, has turned up again, and, like Jack Robinson, would appear never to have been drowned at all.



To the Rescue.

He has too, of course, turned up in a hungry condition, and if we can't get him a Tichborne estate or something of that kind, he will want to live on us; and how, otherwise than in a cannibalistic sense, he is going to do that is a puzzler.

Rat! tat! tat! Here are the Girls.

The first Girl has hugged and wept over me. So has the second. I have been hugged and wept over by all three.

"Oh, why did we ever leave you?" says Bathsheba. "And how could you think you could ever manage all by yourself?"

"What do you mean?" I ask, as calmly as I can.

"Did not our poor mother say he was not to be trusted alone?" says Cassandra.

"What do you mean?" I inquire, smothering my feelings to the best of my ability.

"But it is all that woman," cries Ursula. "It is

she who has led our poor, dear, unhappy, misguided brother into these wild excesses!"

"What do you mean?" I roar in tones of thunder, of which none of the Girls take the slightest notice.

"And where is she?" they ask one another, as though they, arriving suddenly thus, ought to be altogether the best people to give one another every information upon the subject. "Where she ought to be? No! At her husband's side? Certainly not! Where then? Ah!!!"

Upon my word of honour the Girls seem to be piling it up, as it were, and I don't know that I should condescend to afford them any information did not one of them pick up and read aloud the words on the telegram from Mrs. Penny's long-lost papa.

"Good gracious me!" cries Cassandra. "How inconsiderate! How *wicked* of her, and knowing, too, how embarrassed you are. My poor brother!" And they all hug and weep over me once more.

"But look here," I say: "she does not know about all this, and, if anything, I fancy her long-lost father's turning up is as great a surprise to her as to me——"

"Another case of Twopenny!" exclaims Bathsheba. "But, of course, our poor, weak, put-upon, and victimized brother will not again be the pitiful dupe he was before."

Confound this way of sympathizing! but at the same time I *am* resolved. And as I remember once upon the——Bother that, though!—suffice it to say I AM RESOLVED!

---

## CHAPTER XXV

## HE IS NOWHERE.

ANOTHER rat—tat—tat! This time it is Mrs. Penny and her long-lost father, to whom Clarissa opens the door, and they go into the parlour together.

Bathsheba says, "Everything depends on our first step. Let it be decisive. Let us go in a body and confront them!"

I somehow hardly think this will be the best plan. On the whole, I would rather do what confronting



The General.

there has to be done by myself, and I presume that I, who on—but no matter——

In the parlour I find Mrs. Penny and her long-lost father. I do not take much notice of Mrs. Penny, but fix my eye firmly on her long-lost father, who is seated. As I fix him, however, he rises, and, indeed, goes on rising to such an alarming height that I have to tilt my head backwards to keep pace with him, and before I can recover from the surprise at finding that Mrs. Penny's long-lost is so long when found, Mrs. Penny has introduced him thus: "My papa, General Pinner," and the General himself has laid his two hands upon my shoulders, and said, looking down upon me from somewhere near the ceiling, "Penny, I'm glad to meet you. She's a treasure, sir, is my girl. You treat her well, and are kind to her. She says so, and I am glad to hear it. I am glad to meet you!" And he smacks *me*—Major Penny—on the back!!! A person I know, who writes plays that answer, tells me you should work steadily up to your *dénouement*, and bring down your curtain sharp, without any superfluous dialogue.

I am not quite sure that I ever tried to work up to a *dénouement*, but I'm very certain now it has come I don't want to utter one unnecessary word upon the subject.

As briefly as possible, then, allow me to state that Mrs. Penny's long-lost father has for the last two years been lost in the centre of South Africa, something after the manner of the late Dr. Livingstone, only Mr. Stanley did not go out to find *him*. It would appear he earned the rank of General in the American Civil War, and in the centre of Africa acquired colossal wealth. I must confess that hitherto my estimate of American Generals has been small, but there some-



how seems no disputing General Pinner as an enormous fact many feet long.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a banging at the street door, and a clatter of hoofs upon the door-step. The Twins have arrived!

"Fine boys," the General says, "remarkably fine boys. Home for the holidays, I suppose? I am glad of that. I love to see boys at their sports. What games we shall have in the back garden!"

Hooray!

"I never heard of any one before of the name of Penny," says the General, "but the name of Twopenny is that of a dear old friend whom I would give the world to meet again, and lend a helping hand to, if he wants it. He saved my life!"

Perhaps it's our Twopenny, and he is coming to live with us. Hooray again!



The General lays it down.

"This pill-box of a place is unendurable," says the General, dashing his head for the tenth time against the hall lamp. "We must get something larger, and not in a confounded deadly-lively suburb like this. Something in Park Lane will do, and the Girls can live with us as well, and keep house."

I wonder what position I am to occupy? Once more, Hooray!

\* \* \* \* \*

"Please, sir, a man has left this," says Clarissa.

What's this? Oh, I see: it's only Pail, the detective, who has caught the man who killed the Gander, and I am subpoenaed as a witness! Ho-o-o-o-ray!!!



CURTAIN  
(No call.)

Established



35 Years.

**"POND'S EXTRACT,"** an extraordinary mixture of pure and concentrated Distillations from the Hamamelis Shrub; it has received the endorsement of Standard Medical Writers, and is recommended by numerous Members of the Medical Profession. Applied externally, it results in the speedy alleviation of pain; taken internally, it acts specifically upon the circulation. Its effect is signal in CHRONIC CONGESTIONS, INFLAMMATIONS, especially RHEUMATIC and NEURALGIC AFFECTIONS, HÆMORRHAGES, ULCERS, BRUISED ARTERIES, and other injuries. It possesses very healing properties.

### MEDICAL TESTIMONIALS

*From all parts of the country can be produced. The following is from—*

**CHARLES LOWDER, M.D.,** Lansdown House, Ryde, Isle of Wight, Dec. 18, 1876:—"I have found POND'S EXTRACT of much service. I shall be happy to recommend it to my patients, and am willing that my name should appear amongst its professional advocates."

**DR. BERNARD, F.R.C.P.,** 16 Crescent, Clifton:—"Dr. Bernard is willing that you should use his name as using and much approving your Extract."—*Nov. 22nd, 1876.*

**ARTHUR GUINNESS, M.D., F.R.C.S.,**—"I have prescribed POND'S EXTRACT for Hæmorrhages of various kinds, for Hæmorrhoids, and for Affections of the Eye, and also in Rheumatic Inflammatory Swellings of the Joints, with great success."—*Sept. 27th, 1876.*

**G. F. MABERLY, M.R.C.S.,** Arboretum Hydropathic Establishment, Leamington, Oct. 23, 1876:—"I have found POND'S EXTRACT very useful in Piles and Inflammatory Discharges from the body, acute or chronic. It seems to possess very healing properties."

AND OTHER WELL-KNOWN M.D.'S.

*PHYSICIANS, HOSPITALS, AND DISPENSARIES supplied on liberal terms.*

*"HISTORY AND USES," post-free on application to*

**"THE POND'S EXTRACT COMPANY,"** Sole Proprietors,  
General Depot: 482 Oxford Street, London.

*Sold by all Chemists in Bottles, at 1s. 1d., 2s. 3d., 4s. 6d., and 8s. 6d., or sent carriage paid to any town in the Kingdom, by the Proprietors, on the receipt of 1s., 2s., 4s., or 8s. stamps.*

# **The Birkbeck Building Society's Annual Receipts EXCEED FOUR MILLIONS.**

---

## **HOW TO PURCHASE A HOUSE FOR TWO GUINEAS PER MONTH,**

With Immediate Possession, and no rent to pay. Apply at the Office of the BIRKBECK BUILDING SOCIETY, 29 and 30 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane.

---

## **HOW TO PURCHASE A PLOT OF LAND FOR FIVE SHILLINGS PER MONTH,**

With Immediate Possession, either for Building or Gardening purposes. Apply at the Office of the BIRKBECK FREEHOLD LAND SOCIETY, 29 and 30 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane.

---

ESTABLISHED 1851.

---

## **BIRKBECK BANK.**

The BIRKBECK BANK opens Drawing or Current Accounts with trading firms and private individuals, in accordance with the usual practice of other Bankers, but with the important exception that it allows Interest to its Customers on their Balances, and makes no charge for keeping Accounts.

The Bank also receives Money on Deposit for fixed periods, or payable on demand.

The Deposits are invested in Government Stocks, Shares, and other readily convertible securities, and in Freehold and Leasehold Properties. The BIRKBECK BANK thus affords a safe channel for the savings of all classes, and for the investment of funds by private trustees, charitable institutions, and friendly societies.

The BIRKBECK BANK accepts neither personal security for advances, nor discounts bills for Customers, except with collateral security, so that it enjoys an exemption from losses unknown to either joint-stock or private banks.

The Invested Surplus Funds, as well as the Reserve of the BIRKBECK BUILDING SOCIETY, form a source of additional security to the Depositors in the BIRKBECK BANK. These Funds amounted to nearly Two Million Sterling at the last annual balance.

FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, Manager.

# THE NUBIAN BLACKING

For Ladies' and Gentlemen's Boots and Shoes.

The NUBIAN BLACKING is perfectly waterproof.

The NUBIAN BLACKING will not rub off, or soil ladies' skirts.

The NUBIAN BLACKING need only be applied once a week.

The NUBIAN BLACKING will not crack.



The NUBIAN BLACKING gives a polish equal to patent leather.

The NUBIAN BLACKING will polish belts, travelling bags, harness, and all leather goods.

The NUBIAN BLACKING keeps the leather soft and pliable.

AGENTS IN EVERY TOWN.

WHOLESALE ONLY AT

**1 WORSHIP STREET, FINSBURY, LONDON, E.C.**

See that your Boots are made with

**GOODYEAR'S**

## **PATENT STEEL SPRINGS**

For Ladies' and Gentlemen's Boots and Shoes.

These Springs give ease to the Foot and elasticity to the Boot. Goodyear's Patent Steel Springs effectually prevent Corns and Bunions. See that your Boots have "Goodyear's Patent Steel Springs" stamped on the sole.

WHOLESALE ONLY OF THE

**BLAKE and GOODYEAR BOOT and SHOE MACHINERY CO., LIMITED,**  
**1 WORSHIP STREET, FINSBURY, E.C.**

Buy only the

**STANDARD**

## **SCREWED BOOTS & SHOES.**

They never Rip, and are Water-tight. Easy, Pliable, and perfectly smooth inside. Keep their shape longer than any other Shoes. The Screw increases the wear of the sole.

NOT AFFECTED BY HEAT OR COLD, NOR DRYNESS OR MOISTURE.

"No Awl used,"  
the screw makes  
its own Hole in  
the Leather.



Every fastening  
turned in the Sole  
same as a wood  
screw.

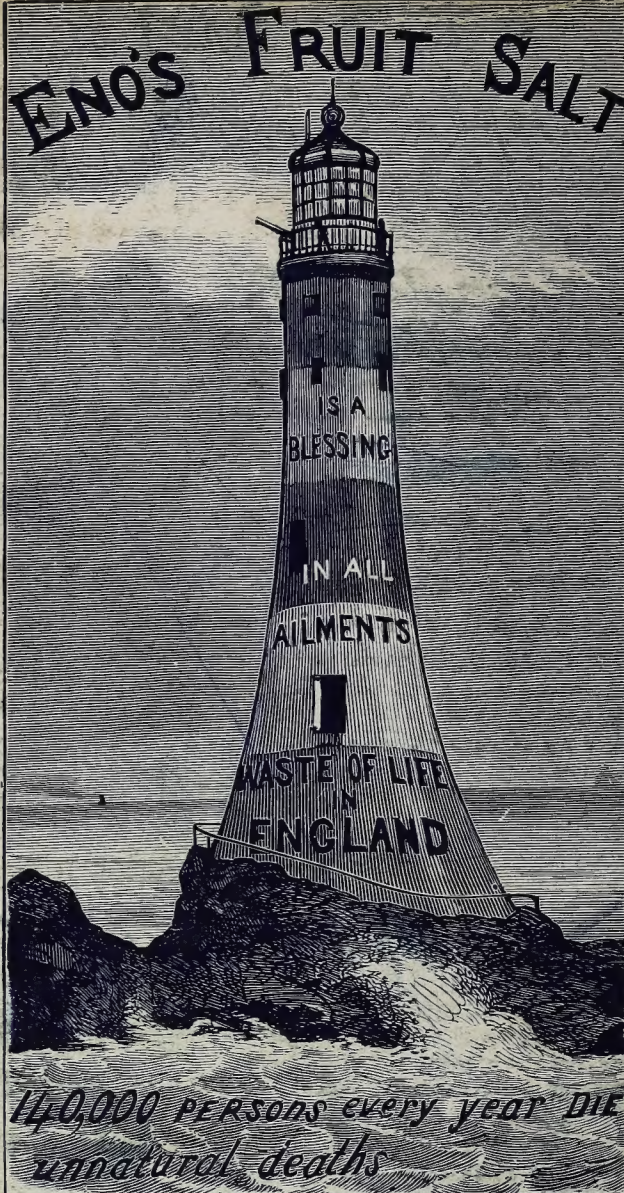
**STANDARD FASTENED BOOTS AND SHOES**

ARE SOLD IN EVERY CITY AND TOWN IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

**The BLAKE & GOODYEAR BOOT & SHOE MACHINERY CO., LIMITED,**



**A LCOHOLIC DRINKS, WANT OF EXERCISE, &c., frequently produces Constipation, Dyspepsia, Bliousness, Headache, &c.** ENO'S FRUIT SALT is the best remedy. Unlike other salines, instead of lowering the system, it invigorates. A Gentleman writes: "I have used ENO'S FRUIT SALT for six years, and I willingly endorse the statement that ENO'S FRUIT SALT is imperatively necessary to the enjoyment of perfect health. By its use many kinds of food will agree, which otherwise would produce wretchedness."



**IMPORTANT TO ALL.—ENO'S FRUIT SALT.—**

A Lady writes: "Everything, medicine or food, ceased to act properly for at least three months before I commenced taking it: the little food I could take generally punished me or returned. My life was one of great suffering, so that I must have succumbed before long. To me and our family it has been a great earthly blessing."

**280,000 ARE CONSTANTLY SUFFERING FROM ACTUAL DISEASE WHICH MAY BE PREVENTED.**

**USE ENO'S FRUIT SALT.**—It removes poisonous matter caused by vitiated air, errors of eating or drinking, &c., by natural means. No one is safe without having at hand some efficient means of warding off Blood Poisons, Fevers, &c. After a very patient and careful observation, extending over many years, of the effects of ENO'S FRUIT SALT, I have not the least hesitation in stating that if its great value in keeping the body healthy were universally known, not a single travelling trunk or portmanteau would be without it.—J. C. ENO.

**CAUTION.**—Examine each bottle, and see the CAPSULE is MARKED "ENO'S FRUIT SALT." Without, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation. Sold by all Chemists. Price 2s. 9d. & 4s. 6d.

Prepared only by J. C. ENO'S PATENT at Eno's Fruit Salt Works, Hatcham, London, S.E.

